

LA GRANDE ALLURE

*Travelling by train in Europe
and elsewhere Overseas*

2000's



by Peter Dawes

**La Grande Allure:
Travelling by train in Europe and elsewhere Overseas
2000's**

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FRONT COVER PHOTO

2000's-1: Eurostar No. 9031 just arrived at London Waterloo International station from Paris (2003/10/28) [PETER DAWES].

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DEDICATION

to Eva Young

FOREWORD

This project documents my extensive train travels over the years in Europe, and to a much lesser extent in Australia and Fiji, India and Sri Lanka, Japan and Hong Kong.

The current volume covers the 2000's, specifically two holidays: 2003 in England, France, Portugal, Scotland and Spain; and 2007 in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia.

This is **VERSION 8** (for changes from the previous version, please see page 179).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PETER DAWES worked as a transportation policy researcher, analyst, project manager and advisor for the Canadian Transport Commission and Government of Alberta until taking early retirement. He has had a lifelong personal and professional interest in railways and passenger trains, and resides with his wife Sandra in Edmonton, Alberta.

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PHOTO CREDITS

All by the author, except 2000's-3, 11, 18, 23, 30, 31 (Sandra Dawes).

IMPORTANT!

Please see **GENERAL NOTES AND CAVEATS** below for important information regarding copyright, ownership, use and acquisition of photos appearing in this document (specifically under **Photographs**, page 10).

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fifth volume of my overseas rail-travel project, offering detailed accounts of train trips taken during the 2000's, namely our 2003 and 2007 holidays in Europe.

Previous volumes cover the 1970's, 1st part of the 1980's (1980, '81 and '84), 2nd part of the same decade (1985 and '88), and the 1990's. A later volume deals with the 2010's. There is also a comprehensive "Reprise" providing: a review of overseas rail-passenger developments by decade; an overall summary of my travels; personal ratings of trains; interesting cars and locomotives encountered; and several tables of detailed trip information. I've also prepared a "Companion Document" offering trip, train and equipment details, which may appeal to the real enthusiast.

Please note that this project follows my earlier *No Matter Where It's Going: Travelling by train in Canada and elsewhere in North America*.

The 2000's accounted for 16% of my overseas trips. Other percentages (in descending order) are: 1980's, 34; 1970's, 17; 2010's, 15; and 1990's, 11. (The 2020's so far: 7%.)

BEFORE PROCEEDING...

Those familiar with other volumes might wish to skip over the rest of this section.

Turning to the current volume, I begin by providing **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** of those persons without whose assistance this project could not have happened. To assist readers as they go through the year-by-year accounts, I then offer **GENERAL NOTES & CAVEATS**, **ABBREVIATIONS**, a **SAMPLE ENTRY**, and a **QUICK INDEX OF TRAINS TAKEN**.

Next comes the meat of the document. For the **decade** involved, I provide the overall context, summary of trips taken, places visited, and particularly noteworthy trips. For each **holiday** within that decade, I begin with a **SYNOPSIS** covering: the context; trips taken and distance travelled; types and numbers of cars and locomotives making up the trains; places visited; noteworthy train trips; fastest and slowest average speeds; and any memorable associated trips by other modes of transport.

Then, under the heading **TRIPS AND TRAIN COMPOSITION** and for each train trip, I provide the date and (in a headline) service provider, train number, embarkation point, disembarkation point, origin and final destination (if different), and train name (where applicable). I go on to show the detailed train composition in a darkly shaded box, followed by departure time, arrival time, purpose of the trip, and in some cases major enroute stops. (If more than one leg was involved, I mention the ultimate destination, trip purpose and connecting points at the start of the first leg.) I then describe any interesting aspects about the train and route taken, and things that happened along the way. I also provide a brief account of any relevant events that occurred before the train departed or after it arrived at my destination.

At the end of the entry (lightly shaded), I often provide the distance in both kilometres and miles, elapsed time and average speed. Occasionally, I also offer further details on equipment, particularly Sleeping cars and locomotives.

Now for an important explanation. I fully reference every point-to-point, inter-community *rail* trip taken, including excursions on both regular lines and preserved railways – also commuter rail trips, provided they went beyond the city or region concerned. I note, but do not fully reference, associated marine, road and air trips, as well as intra-community trips by main-line railways. Where urban transit systems are concerned, I make note of trains and trams, both underground and surface if they were of an interurban nature (such as joining a city centre with an airport), provided a direct connection between intercity stations, or enabled access to a specific event or attraction.

At the end of the volume, I provide a **GENERAL INDEX** by subject, **BIBLIOGRAPHY**, **LIST OF PHOTOS**., and note describing **CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS VERSION**.

Three final points. First, please bear in mind that this is a *personal* account of rail and associated travel. It will appeal mainly to people who already enjoy train travel or might want to try it out; to railway modellers, photographers, historians or researchers; and perhaps to those who are just interested in the evolution of rail travel in Europe during this period. While trip purpose, references to travelling companions, and anecdotes are included, I present this information in such a manner as to be easily avoided by those looking strictly for train composition.

Second, more knowledgeable readers will find many comments and explanations to be old hat and obvious. If you fit this bill, please understand that you will be a lot more familiar with this subject area than others.

Third, I strongly encourage feedback – everything from factual clarifications to minor typographical corrections; to additional car and locomotive information; and to photographs that might fill in gaps or improve on my own efforts. Please contact me using the information shown on page 2 above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the following:

- the late Mark Bunting, Tom Matoff, Ken Mozersky, John Stilgoe, the late Brian Sullivan, and Greg Thompson for being key influences where both my interest in trains and career in transportation are concerned (as cited in the initial *No Matter Where It's Going: 1950's* volume);
- Ken Boulton, Tom Clark, Greg Gormick, Ken Holmes, the late Fred Matthews, Doug Smith and Nicholas Vincent for being kindred spirits;
- Tom Clark for wonderful companionship on many trips, and expanding my appreciation of British steam trains;
- Stefan Dringenberg for providing information on equipment; the late George Drury for his articles and books on Swiss rail travel; Jean Patenaude for advice regarding the presentation of company names in French; the late John Price for his efforts as long time editor of the seminal Thomas Cook *Continental* and *International* timetables; and Geoff Sarbutt, Neil Smith and Michael Taylor for providing information on railway equipment;
- Cindy Chow, Charlie Dawes and Dan Walter for providing valuable advice concerning this project;
- Shaun Fawcett for essential help in publishing these volumes online; and
- my wife Sandra for much-appreciated companionship on several holidays, for design suggestions, and for developing the route schematics, website and web version of these documents.

Specifically where this volume is concerned:

- the late Maria Batey, Sylvia and the late Richard Beardshaw, the Stirling's, Margaret Dyke and Eva Young for providing accommodation, and Kitty and the late Roger Stacey for storing our "Ship Bag";

- Richard James for escorting us around the Black Country Living Museum, and Geoff Sarbutt for showing us the redeveloped St. Pancras station complex;
- John Laidlar for his Portuguese transportation websites; and
- Sandra for contributing photographs.

Despite the assistance provided, the author remains entirely responsible for errors or omissions.

Finally, this volume is dedicated to Eva Young, for furthering our train and other travels subsequent to her move to England in 1989.

Peter Dawes
Edmonton, Alberta
January, 2026.

GENERAL NOTES AND CAVEATS

Photographs: were taken either by the author or his wife; have been chosen to support the text; **remain the property of the photographers; are protected by copyright; and must not be used in any fashion without permission** (please bear in mind that those involving early morning, late afternoon, or night trains often were taken in adverse lighting conditions);

BEFORE PROCEEDING...

Those familiar with other volumes might wish to skip over the rest of this section.

Timings: are shown in local time and taken from Cook's timetables, railway schedules, or other sources;

Distances: are taken mostly from Cook's, or from railway timetables where Cook's doesn't provide such information or does so in a manner which makes computing difficult (distances may vary from one trip to another due to routing changes or updates of information made by Cook's or service providers, and for

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international services are calculated to or from the nearest operating point, which might not necessarily be right at the border; are rounded to the nearest full kilometre or mile; and may vary from timetables especially where conversion back and forth between the two measures was necessary and where Cook's or the service provider used a different ratio);

Average speeds: may reflect time required for operational, servicing, passenger access, parcel and mail handling, or crewing purposes;

Intermediate stops: are either as shown in Cook's, railway timetables or other sources, or were recorded during the trip (stops may be omitted where numerous, especially on local or regional trains, or if they were of a conditional nature);

Train numbers: are shown as typically applied by continental railways, while in the British Isles, departure time from the boarding point is used instead of a number (as has been the common practice there);

Car numbers: were usually *not* recorded, due to the sheer number of services taken, quick station stops, and complexity of both train composition and the numbers themselves;

Locomotive numbers: were often recorded during this decade, in contrast to previous decades;

Car and locomotive names: were rarely encountered but always recorded;

Car or car type occupied: is indicated in **Bold** where there was more than one possibility (sometimes accompanied by a Star [*] for clarity in the web version);

Distinction between first- and second-class Coaches: was recorded during some of the earlier holidays, but is not shown in any of these volumes;

Sleeping car types: were not always recorded but have been determined where possible, based on information contained in various sources;

Locomotive hauled trains: refers to trains having one or more locomotives, or one or more powered cars pulling or pushing non-powered cars, and are shown as "d" for Diesel, "e" for Electric, or "s" for Steam

(furthermore, the term "Diesel" is used instead of the more technically correct "Diesel-Electric");

Locomotive origins and destinations: are often estimated out of necessity, especially beyond the segment travelled and on the Continent, in which case they are shown with a question mark (e.g.: "Ee HAGEN-DĚČÍN?" means an electric locomotive definitely starting at Hagen and possibly terminating at Děčín);

Train reversals enroute: are common in Europe but are normally ignored here (especially a train entering a stub-end station, then leaving in the opposite direction, usually with a fresh locomotive attached to what had been the rear end);

Multiple Unit trains: refers to trains in which all or some cars were powered, and are indicated by the addition of an "m" (e.g., "Cmd" means Coach in a Diesel Multiple Unit train; "Cme" one in an Electric Multiple Unit train);

Equipment units: are shown in categories such as "Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges" (please note that the car types mentioned under these category titles were not necessarily encountered in every decade or period);

Equipment deadheading: is indicated by [dd];

Combination Coach/Guard/Baggage cars: are shown in these volumes as pure Coaches;

Buffet and Restaurant cars: are shown as "B" or "R" (some Buffet cars might have been recorded as Restaurant cars, and vice versa; full Buffet cars were not always distinguished from combination Buffet Coaches, especially in the earlier years; and Buffet cars weren't always identified as such in Electric Multiple Unit trains);

Snack-bar and cart facilities: are not indicated but one or the other typically was available on major trains;

City & other names: are shown in the local language, in some cases more than one (please see below under **ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF NAMES**);

Award of multi-service provider trips: goes to the service provider accounting for the greater or greatest

distance;

Travel by non-rail means: is highlighted by a bullet, either on its own if it occurred at the start of a journey on a non-rail travel day, otherwise within the normal text;

Recording of train composition: has inevitably resulted in inaccuracies and omissions, due to: switching of equipment prior to my joining or leaving a train (or during the middle of the night); mistakes made in recording equipment types; late boarding or hurried exit from trains; and occasional grumpiness or sheer laziness – in which case assumptions have been made regarding the particular car or locomotive (or number of units), based in some cases on photos taken at the time, and shown in *Italics*.

ABBREVIATIONS

SERVICE PROVIDERS

[Note: coloured abbreviations carry through from earlier volumes]

ÁEV	Állami Erdei Vasút (State Forest Railways)
ATN	Arriva Trains North
BBL	Bluebell Railway
ČD	České Dráhy (Czech Railways)
CHT	Chiltern Trains
CP	Caminhos de Ferro Portugueses (Portuguese State Railways)
CT	Central Trains
DB/DBAG	Deutsche Bahn AG (German Railroad)
ES	Eurostar (UK)
ET	Eusko Trenbideak/Ferrocarriles Vascos (Basque Railways)
FCC	First Capital Connect
FEVE	Ferrocarriles de Via Estrecha (Narrow Gauge Railways)
FGC	Ferrocarriles de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government Railways)
FGW	First Great Western
FTPE	First TransPennine Express

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GCR	Great Central Railway
GNER	Great North Eastern Railway
MÁV	Magyar Államvasutak (Hungarian State Railways)
MML	Midland Mainline
MMR	Midland Metro
NR	Northern Rail
ÖBB	Österreichische Bundesbahnen (Austrian Federal Railways)
OŽ	Ozubnicovej Železnice (Cog Railway) (ŽSSK)
P&D	Paignton & Dartmouth Steam Railway
RENFE	Red Nacional de los Ferrocarriles Españoles (Spanish National Railways)
SCR	ScotRail
SNCB	Société nationale des chemins de fer Belges/Nationale Maatschappij der Belgische Spoorwegen (Belgian National Railways)
SNCF	Société nationale des chemins de fer Français (French National Railways)
SPT	Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive
SR	Southern Railway (contemporary)
SVR	Severn Valley Railway
SWT	South West Trains
TEŽ	Tatranská Elektrická Železničná (Tatra Electric Railway) (ŽSSK)
TI	Trenitalia/Ferrovie dello Stato (Italian State Railways)
TT	Thames Trains
VT	Virgin Trains
ŽSSK	Železničná Spoločnosť Slovensko (Slovak State Railways)

ADDITIONAL RAILWAYS AND RAIL ENTITIES

BBLS	Battle of Britain Locomotive Society
BCC	Bulmers Cider Co.
BR	British Rail

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BUL	Bullied Society
CIWL	Compagnie internationale des Wagons-lits et du Tourisme (International Sleeping Car and Tourism Co.)
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railway
CRC	CrossCountry Trains
DVR	Dart Valley Railway
EFH	E.F. Howlden Charitable Trust
EMT	East Midlands Trains
EWS	English, Welsh & Scottish Railway
GNR	Great Northern Railway
GWR	Great Western Railway
GWSV	Great Western (SVR) Association
ISSC	Isle of Scilly Steamship Co.
IWSR	Isle of Wight Steam Railway
JLV	Jídelní a Lůžkové Vozy (Dining and Sleeping Car Co.) (ČD)
LMID	London Midland Trains
LMM	Lord Montagu Motor Museum
LNER	London & North Eastern Railway
LNWR	London & North Western Railway
NCB	National Coal Board
NRM	National Railway Museum
NS	Nederlandse Spoorwegen (Netherlands State Railway)
NXEC	National Express East Coast Trains
NYMR	North Yorkshire Moors Railway
PLC	Pullman Company
RFD	Railfreight Distribution
RRNE	Regional Railways North East
RZD	Rossiskiye Zheleznye Dorogi (Russian Railways)
SBB	Schweizerische Bundesbahnen/Chemin de fer fédéraux Suisse/Ferrovie Federali Svizzere (Swiss Federal Railways)
SLL	Southern Locomotives Ltd.
SOU	Southern Railway (former)
TL	Thameslink

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UVIR	Unidade de Viagens Interurbanas and Regionais (Interurban & Regional Trip Unit) (CP)
VSOE	Venice Simplon Orient Express
VTB	Vogtlandbahn
WBL	Wadebridge (34007) Ltd.

RAIL EQUIPMENT

A	Automobile carrier
AMB	Ambulance car
BC	Buffet Coach
BK	Buffet Kitchen
BL	Buffet Lounge
C	Coach
CfC	Cafe Coach
CfL	Cafe Lounge
d	Diesel
dd	Equipment deadheading
DMU	Diesel Multiple Unit train
DVT	Driving Van Trailer
E	Engine
e	Electric
EMU	Electric Multiple Unit train
ex-	Formerly
lr-	Later
m	Self-propelled multiple-unit train
OBS	Observation
OL	Observation Lounge
P	Pullman
PB	Pullman Buffet
PC	Power car Coach
PK	Pullman Kitchen
R	Restaurant
RB	Restaurant Buffet

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RC	Restaurant Coach
RL	Restaurant Lounge
S	Sleeper
s	Steam
T	Couchette car
U	Generator car
Y	Dormitory

TRAIN MARKETING NAMES

AP	Alfa Pendular
AVE	Alta Velocidad Española
EC	EuroCity
EN	EuroNacht/Notte/Night/Nuit
ES	Euro Star Italia
ETR	Elettro Treno Rapido (Electric Rapid Train)
E225	Electric 225
Hotel	Trenhotel
HST	High Speed Train
IC	Intercity
ICE	Inter City Express
IR	Inter-Regional
NZ	NachtZug
SC	SuperCity
TGV	Train à grande vitesse (High Speed Train)
TRD	Tren Regional Diesel
T200	Talgo 200

SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS

dc	Double-berth compartment
qc	Quadruple-berth compartment
tc	Triple-berth compartment

EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS

ADS	ADtranz-Stadler
ADT	ADtranz
ALS	Alstom
ALSF	Alstom Ferroviaria
ANST	Ansaldo Trasporti
BBC	Brown Boveri
BBD	Bombardier
BR	British Rail
BRCW	Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Co.
BREL	British Rail Engineering Ltd.
BTF	Brush Traction/Falcon
CAF	Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles
CCW	Clayton Carriage Works
CIWL	Compagnie internationale des Wagons-lits
ČKD	ČKD Vagonka-Škoda Transportation
FAN	Fiore-Ansaldo
FF	Fiat Ferroviaria
FRW	Faur Romania 25 August Works
GCRW	Great Central Railway Works
GECAL	GEC-Alstom
GED	Ganz Éstársá Danubius
GNRW	Great Northern Railway Works
GVG	Ganz-MÁVAG
GWRW	Great Western Railway Works
HW	Hansa Waggon
KM	Krauss-Maffei
KS	Kerr, Stuart
LLD	Leyland Motors
MAC	Material y Construcciones (Macosa)
MC	Metropolitan Cammell

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MCWW	Metropolitan Carriage & Wagon Works
MIT	Mitsubishi
MTE	Société Matériel et Traction Électrique
PSC	Pressed Steel Co.
REGA	Reggiane-Ansaldo
RMV	Rába Magyar Vagon és Gépgyár
SAV	Savigliano
SDW	Siemens-Duewag
ŠKD	Škodovy Závody (Skoda Works)
SLM	Schweizerische Lokomotiv- und Maschinenfabrik
SMT	Siemens Transportation
SOFA	Sofer-Ansaldo
SOR	Sociedades Reunidas de Fabricacoes Metálicas (Sorefame)
SRW	Southern Railway Works
TAL	Talgo Patentes
TRV	Consorzio Treno Veloce Italiano (TREVI)
VTS	Vagonka Tatra Studénka
WMD	Waggon- und Maschinenbau Donauwörth

COUNTRIES

Aust.	Austria
Bel.	Belgium
CR	Czech Republic
Eng.	England
Fr.	France
Ger.	Germany
Hung.	Hungary
It.	Italy
Port.	Portugal
Scot.	Scotland
Slov.	Slovakia
Sp.	Spain

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Swit. Switzerland

PLACE NAMES

Birm'ham Birmingham
Brux/Brussel Bruxelles/Brussel

ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF NAMES

Beograd Belgrade
Bruxelles/Brussel Brussels
Bucureşti Bucharest
Catalunya Catalonia
Dana/Donau Danube
Firenze Florence
Hannover Hanover
Karlovy Vary Carlsbad
København Copenhagen
Köln Cologne
Kraków Cracow
Kyïv Kiev
Lisboa Lisbon
Marseille Marseilles
Milano Milan
Moskva/Mozskva Moscow
München Munich
Nürnberg Nuremberg
Padova Padua
Plzeň Pilsen
Porto Oporto
Praha Prague
Roma Rome
Sankt Peterburg St. Petersburg

Sevilla	Seville
Venezia	Venice
Warszawa	Warsaw
Wien	Vienna

SAMPLE ENTRY

12 OCT:

SNCF 3731 PARIS AUSTERLITZ-PERPIGNAN [*PORT BOU*] *Le Côte Vermeille*

Ee	
T	[6]
S	[61 87 75-71 142-6]
C	[3]
C	[3] PARIS-TOULOUSE [<i>LA TOUR DE CAROL/ENVEITG</i>]
T	[3] "

Depart 2156, arrive 0721 next morning on *Le Côte Vermeille*, including stops at Les Aubrais-Orléans, Vierzon, Limoges, Toulouse (operational), Castelnaudary, Carcassonne, Lézignan and Narbonne, in a Sleeping car built some three decades earlier by Waggon- und Maschinenbau Donauwörth; * *Le Train-Bleu* already had left for the Riviera at 2117 (before we arrived at Austerlitz), no longer calling Gare de Lyon home; * 926 km in 9 hrs 25 mins, or 98 km/h (578 mls/61 mph); * T2 Sleeper (WMD, 1968-72, 18dc; ex-CIWL)

Explanations:

12 OCT:

SNCF 3731

PARIS AUSTERLITZ-PERPIGNAN

[PORT BOU]

Le Côte Vermeille

Ee

T [6]

- departure date;
- service provider was SNCF; train number 3731;
- segment travelled, the train originating at Paris Austerlitz;
- train terminating at Port Bou;
- name of train;
- Locomotive originating at Paris Austerlitz and operating all the way to Port Bou (the "e" indicating Electric);
- six Couchette cars also operating over the entire route;

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- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>S [61 87 75-71 142-6]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one Sleeper likewise, bearing the number shown (the Bold indicating we occupied this car); |
| <p>C [3]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three Coaches likewise; |
| <p>C [3]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three Coaches operating as far as TOULOUSE on this train, then on another to LA TOUR DE CAROL/ENVEITG; |
| <p>T [3]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three Couchette cars likewise. |
| <p>* 926 km in 9 hrs 25 mins, or
98 km/h (578 mls/61 mph)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distance travelled, elapsed time, and average speed in kilometres (<i>and miles</i>); |
| <p>* T2 Sleeper (WMD, 1968-72,
18dc; ex-CIWL)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeper of T2 type built by Waggon- und Maschinenbau Donauwörth with 18, 2-berth compartments; formerly owned by the Wagons-Lits Co.. |

QUICK INDEX OF TRAINS TAKEN

<i>number</i>	<i>name or from-to</i>	<i>page(s)</i>
ARRIVA TRAINS NORTH (ATN)		
0908	Doncaster-Sheffield	52
1920	Doncaster-Scunthorpe	51
AUSTRIAN FEDERAL (ÖBB)		
EC 62	Budapest Keleti-Wien West	117
EN 237	<i>Allegro Don Giovanni</i>	118
BASQUE (ET)		
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<i>number</i>	<i>name or from-to</i>	<i>page(s)</i>
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9138	London Waterloo Intern'l-Brux Midi/Bruss Zuid	97
9453	Bruxelles Midi/Brussel Zuid-Köln	98
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1615	Kingscote-Horsted Keynes	139
1635	Horsted Keynes-Kingscote	139
CATALAN GOVERNMENT (FGC)		
-	Ribes de Freser Vila/Enlaç-Vall de Núria67	[& v.v.]
CENTRAL TRAINS (CT)		
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1036	Lincoln-Leicester	133
1253	Leicester-Birmingham New St.	133
1343	Birmingham New St.-Kidderminster	61
1703	Birmingham Snow Hill-Blakedown	134
1835	Kidderminster-Birmingham Snow Hill	62
CHILTERN TRAINS (CHT)		
2010	Birmingham Snow Hill-London Marylebone	62
COG RAILWAY (OŽ)		
8022	Štrba-Štrbské Pleso	108
8023	Štrbské Pleso-Štrba	108

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SC 73	<i>Johann Gregor Mendel</i>	101
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421	<i>Excelsior</i>	104
664	Brno-České Budějovice	102
752	Plzeň-Mariánské Lázně	103
7159	Mariánské Lázně-Bečov nad Teplou	104
8102	Český Krumlov-České Budějovice	103
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9924	Praha Hlavní-Karlštejn	101
9933	Karlštejn-Praha Hlavní	101
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9031	Paris Nord-London Waterloo International	88,127
9138	London Waterloo Intern'l-Brux Midi/Bruss Zuid	97
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0812	London Blackfriars-Haywards Heath	136
FIRST GREAT WESTERN (FGW)		
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0927	Worcester Shrub Hill-London Paddington	135
1003	Penzance-St. Erth	142
1014	St. Erth-St. Ives	142
1456	St. Ives-St. Erth	142
1802	Plymouth-Newton Abbot	143
2350	<i>Night Riviera</i>	140

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0800	Scunthorpe-Doncaster	129
1026	York-Northallerton	130
1208	Preston-Manchester Piccadilly	146
1552	Northallerton-York	131
1742	Doncaster-Scunthorpe	131
1853	Doncaster-Scunthorpe	129
FRENCH NATIONAL (SNCF)		
EN 226	<i>Palatino</i>	125
3731	<i>Le Côte Vermeille</i>	64
4052	<i>La Palombe Bleue</i>	87
9016	London Waterloo International-Paris Nord	63
9031	Paris Nord-London Waterloo International	88,127
9138	London Waterloo Intern'l-BruX Midi/Bruss Zuid	97
77653	Perpignan-Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains	65
-	<i>Le Petit Train Jaune</i>	66
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NZ 1449	<i>Kopernikus</i>	98
9453	Bruxelles Midi/Brussel Zuid-Köln	98
GREAT CENTRAL (GCR)		
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1410	<i>Elizabethan</i>	53
GREAT NORTH EASTERN (GNER)		
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1700	London King's Cross-Doncaster	127
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531	<i>Rákóczi</i>	110
IC 567	Füzesabony-Budapest Keleti	114
2122	Budapest Nyugati-Zebegény	115
2135	Zebegény-Budapest Nyugati	115
2266	Budapest Nyugati-Magyar Vasúttörténeti Park	116
5505	Eger-Füzesabony	112
5548	Füzesabony-Eger	111
35514	Eger-Skalajkavölgy	111
35523	Szilvásvár-Eger	112
-	Hűvösvölgy-Széchenyi hegy	115
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PORTUGUESE STATE (CP)		
AP 135	Lisboa Santa Apolónia-Porto Campanhã	79
311	<i>Sud-Expresso</i>	83
332	<i>Lusitânia</i>	76
IC 522	Porto Campanhã-Coimbra B	82
IR 861	Porto São Bento-Régua	80
IR 864	Régua-Porto São Bento	82
4201	Régua-Tua	80
4210	Tua-Régua	81
6203	Tua-Mirandela	81
-	Lisboa Rossi-Sintra (& v.v.)	79
SCOTRAIL (SCR)		
0925	Aberdeen-Keith	55
1851	Elgin-Inverness	56
1958	<i>Caledonian Sleeper</i>	54
2341	<i>Caledonian Sleeper</i>	59
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1715	Bridgnorth-Kidderminster	61

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SLOVAK STATE (ŽSSK)		
IC 405	<i>Tatran</i>	109
413	<i>Rákóczi</i>	110
421	<i>Excelsior</i>	104
SOUTHERN (SR)		
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SOUTH WEST TRAINS (SWT)		
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1558	London Waterloo-Ashford (Mid.)	96
1738	Reading-Staines	147
1833	Staines-London Waterloo	147
2005	London Waterloo-Southampton Central	147
2202	Ashford (Mid.)-London Waterloo	60
2211	Ashford (Mid.)-London Waterloo	96
SPANISH NATIONAL (RENFE)		
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875	<i>Antoni Gaudí</i>	69
3032	Córdoba-Sevilla Santa Justa	74
3064	Granada-Bobadilla	73
3943	Almería-Granada	72
7058	Madrid Atocha Cercanías-Algodor	70
7069	Algodor-Madrid Atocha Cercanías	70

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<i>number</i>	<i>name or from-to</i>	<i>page(s)</i>
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9635	Sevilla Santa Justa-Madrid Puerta de Atocha	75
-	Irún-Donostia/San Sebastián	84
-	La Tour de Carol/Enveitg-Ribes de Freser	67
-	Ribes de Freser-Barcelona Sants	68
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-	Slajkavölgy Lovespálya-Szalajka Fatyolvízésés	112 [<i>& v.v.</i>]
STRATHCLYDE PASSENGER TRANSPORT EXECUTIVE (SPT)		
1048	Glasgow Central-Lanark	58
1522	Lanark-Glasgow Central	58
1630	Glasgow Central-Paisley Gilmour St.	59
2035	Glasgow Central-Bishopton	58
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8112	Poprad Tatry-Starý Smokovec	106
8117	Starý Smokovec- Poprad Tatry	109
8120	Starý Smokovec-Štrbské Pleso	107
8122	Starý Smokovec-Štrbské Pleso	108
8129	Štrbské Pleso-Starý Smokovec	107,108
8210	Starý Smokovec-Tatranská Lomnica	106
8215	Tatranská Lomnica-Starý Smokovec	109
8217	Tatranská Lomnica-Starý Smokovec	107
8219	Tatranská Lomnica-Starý Smokovec	108
8224	Starý Smokovec-Tatranská Lomnica	108,109
THAMES TRAINS (TT)		
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<i>number</i>	<i>name or from-to</i>	<i>page(s)</i>
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EN 237/8	<i>Allegro Don Giovanni</i>	118
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IR 610	Venezia Santa Lucia-Padova	122
IR 2110	Venezia Santa Lucia-Padova	121
3133	Firenze Santa Maria Novella-Pisa Centrale	124
ES 9465	Padova-Firenze Santa Maria Novella	123
23386	Pisa Centrale-Firenze Santa Maria Novella	124
VIRGIN TRAINS (VT)		
0745	London Euston-Wolverhampton	59
1035	London Euston-Birmingham New St.	61
1354	Manchester Piccadilly-Reading	147
1400	Birmingham New St.-Wolverhampton	133
1403	Newton Abbot-Preston	145
1512	St. Erth-St. Austell	142

THE 2000's



2000's-2: CP No. 311 *Sud-Expresso* arriving at Coimbra-B station in the evening dusk, on its way from Lisboa to Irún (2003/10/25) [PETER DAWES].

*ENGLAND/SCOTLAND/SPAIN
PORTUGAL/ITALY/France
CZECH REPUBLIC/AUSTRIA
SLOVAKIA/HUNGARY
GERMANY/BEL-
GIUM*



[Sources: ATN, CHT, CT, ES, GNER, MML, SCR, SWT, TT, VT: itravelnet.com;
bluebell-railway.co.uk; cd.cz; CP: railway-technology.com/projects/alfa.pt; db.
de; euskotren.es; feve.es; FCC, FGW, FTPE: firstgroup.com/scotrail;
FGC: barcelonaturisme.com; gcrailway.co.uk; mav.hu; Midland
Metro: networkwestmidlands.com; northernrail.org; ÖBB:
oebb.at; P&DSR: ticket; snrb: b-rail.be; snf: co.uk;
southernrailway.com; spt.co.uk; svr.co.uk;
trenitalia.com; ŽSSR: slovakrail.sk
(Unavailable: ÁEV,
OŽ, TEŽ)]

OVERALL CONTEXT

***If you climb aboard the wrong train, there
is no point in walking back along the
corridor in the right direction.***

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
*(in Jean-Paul Caracalla,
Travel Posters, 19)*

Our two holidays during this decade took place from our Edmonton base. This quotation, by the famous German theologian, offers practical advice for life in general, and obviously for train riders as well.

The first decade of the new millennium has seen tumultuous times in the British rail industry. Railtrack failed as the private custodian of track and other infrastructure and went into administration (meaning bankruptcy), to be replaced by Network Rail, a “not for dividend” company whose “profits” went back into the business – in other words, government-owned. Much of the maintenance was still being contracted out to private companies. The number of freight and passenger Train Operating Companies (TOC's) diminished somewhat through consolidation, although new ones continued to emerge. By end of the decade, the government had been forced to take over the big franchise once operated by Great North Eastern. On the freight side, the English, Welsh & Scottish Railway effectively came to run the national “system”, although there were several niche TOC's as well. The equipment-leasing companies represented the only component of the original privatization scheme that was essentially intact.

Eurostar trains continued to provide downtown-to-downtown service between London and Paris or Bruxelles/Brussel at timings in the 2-hour, 40-minute range, using the TGV (*Train à grande vitesse*) Nord line in France. As our 2007 visit ended, the London terminal was within a month of changing from Waterloo International to a rebuilt St. Pancras station, and approximately 20 minutes was to be cut from trip times, due to the extension of high-speed trackage on the English side. The French expanded the TGV network south to Marseille through the Méditerranée line, and to Strasbourg over the Est line, while the Germans opened their Nürnberg-Ingolstadt line, designed to reduce trip times between München and other key cities using ICE (Inter City Express) trains. In Spain, the AVE high-speed line provided excellent service between Madrid and Sevilla (using a TGV variant), and another high-speed line was under construction between Madrid and Barcelona. Alas, a program to upgrade the British West Coast

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Main Line dragged on for years, limiting growth in crucial markets such as London to Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow.

Where overnight trains were concerned, private companies, state railways or consortia of the latter continued to provide Sleeping car services. The French introduced the *Service Nuit* concept, while the Spanish offered *Trenhotel's* equipped with Talgo Pendular equipment and (with the Portuguese) the famous *Sud-Expresso/Surex* between Lisboa and the French border at Irún – most trains including traditional Sleeping car service. Elsewhere, *EuroNotte/Nacht/Night/Nuit* (as well as *NachtZug*) trains provided overnight trains equipped with new or refurbished Sleepers, and European Union legislation resulted in the Compagnie internationale des Wagons-lits et du Tourisme (International Sleeping Car and Tourism Co.) having to bid for staffing and provisioning contracts, winning some but losing others to newcomers. In Britain, Sleeping cars still were being offered between London and both Scotland and the West Country.

Several well-used, narrow-gauge railways continued to flourish in the semi-autonomous Catalan and Basque regions of Spain, Slovakia and elsewhere, some independent but others owned by national railways. However, the carriage of parcels, newspapers and mail by train declined in most countries, and was pretty much eliminated in Britain. In fact, 2007 was the first holiday during which I failed to encounter even one car dedicated solely to these purposes, whether in Britain or on the Continent.

Finally, we used Standard Class Brit Rail passes (covering all of Britain in 2003, but just England in 2007) and first-class Eurailpasses (the latter allowing relatively cheap add-on fares for the *Eurostar*). We also purchased first-class Czech rail passes and regular tickets in Slovakia, because, unlike Hungary, these countries had not joined Eurail.

TRIP DETAILS

We took 157 train trips and travelled 22,535 kilometres (*14,064 miles*) during our two holidays of this decade, including: 8,010 km (*4,999 mls*) in the British Isles; 3,767 km (*2,351 mls*) in Spain; 3,606 km (*2,251 mls*) in France; 1,651 km (*1,030 mls*) in Czech Republic; 1,315 km (*821 mls*) in Portugal; 1,290 km (*805 mls*) in Italy; 930 km (*580 mls*) in Germany; 669 km (*418 mls*) in Hungary; 602 km (*376 mls*) in Austria; 435 km (*271 mls*) in Slovakia; and 260 km (*162 mls*) in Belgium.

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By year, we travelled 12,438 km (7,763 *mls*) by train in 2003 – edging 1978 as the greatest distance accumulated during any of my overseas holidays – and 10,097 km (6,302 *mls*) in 2007. It was the reverse where trips were concerned: 91 in 2007 (the most of any holiday); 66 in 2003.

One-hundred and forty-five of these trips were in my “Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges” category and 12 in “Sleeping & Couchette Cars”, the latter covering 41% of the total distance. Eighty-three were on locomotive hauled and 74 on self-propelled trains, but the latter accounted for only 19% of that distance. We took 10 trips on steam trains, all in the British Isles.

Number of trips by service provider: **14** – Spanish National (RENFE); **13** – Hungarian State (MÁV); **12** – Tatra Electric (TEŽ); **10** – Czech (ČD); **9** – Portuguese State (CP); **8** – French National (SNCF) and South West Trains; **7** – First Great Western (FGW) and First TransPennine Express; **6** – Central Trains, Great North Eastern (GNER), Trenitalia (TI), and Virgin Trains (VT); **4** – Bluebell (BBL), Midland Mainline, ScotRail (SCR), and Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive; **3** – Basque (ET); **2** – Arriva Trains North, Catalan Government (FGC), Cog (OŽ), Great Central (GCR), Narrow Gauge (FEVE), Paignton & Dartmouth, Severn Valley (SVR), Southern and State Forest (ÁEV); **1** – Austrian Federal (ÖBB), Belgian National (SNCB), Chiltern Trains, Eurostar UK (ES), First Capital Connect, German (DB), Midland Metro, Northern, Slovak State (ŽSSK), and Thames Trains.

There were 1,006 units in the trains we took: 131 Locomotives & Related Units and 875 cars. The latter consisted of: Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges, 730; Sleeping & Couchette Cars, 91; Restaurant & Other Meal Cars, 50; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 4.

Fastest average speed in the **British Isles** was on GNER's 1800 E225 service from London King's Cross to Doncaster in 2003: 176 km/h (110 *mph*). **Continent:** RENFE's No. 9635 AVE service from Sevilla Santa Justa to Madrid Puerta de Atocha, also in 2003: 188 km/h (117 *mph*).

Slowest average speed in the **British Isles** was on GCR's 1410 steam train from Leicester North to Loughborough Central in 2003: 17 km/h (11 *mph*). **Continent:** ÁEV from Slajkavölgy Lovespálya to Szalajka Fatyolvízésés in 2007: 9 km/h (6 *mph*).

PLACES VISITED

(Note: * indicates by non-rail means)

England: Ashford (Mid.), Bedale*, Birmingham, Blakedown, Bridgnorth, Brigg*, Chaddesley Corbett*, Cleethorpes, Coalbrookdale*, Doncaster, Dudley*, East Grinstead*, Gatwick, Grimsby, Haywards Heath, Horsted Keynes, Ironbridge*, Kidderminster, Kingscote, Kingswear, Leicester, Leyburn*, Lincoln, London, Loughborough, Manchester, Newton Abbot, Northallerton, Oxted, Paignton, Penzance, Plymouth, Preston, Reading, St. Austell, St. Erth, St. Ives, Scunthorpe, Sheffield, Sheffield Park, Southampton, Staines, Stockport, Stourport*, Tipton*, Torquay*, Wolverhampton, Worcester and York. **Scotland:** Aberdeen, Bishopton, Dufftown*, Edinburgh, Elgin, Erskine*, Glasgow, Inverness, Keith, Lanark, New Lanark* and Paisley.

Austria: Wien. **Belgium:** Bruxelles/Brussel. **Czech Republic:** Bečov nad Teplou, Brno, České Budějovice, Český Krumlov, Karlovy Vary, Karlštejn, Mariánské Lázně, Plzeň and Praha. **France:** Hendaye, La Tour de Carol/Enveitg, Paris, Perpignan and Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains. **Germany:** Köln. **Hungary:** Budapest, Eger, Füzesabony, Slajkovölgy, Szalajka, Szilvásvárad and Zebegény. **Italy:** Firenze, Padova, Pisa and Venezia. **Portugal:** Cacilhas*, Coimbra, Lisboa, Mirandela, Porto, Pragal, Régua, Sintra and Tua. **Slovakia:** Košice, Poprad Tatry, Starý Smokovec, Štrba, Štrbské Pleso and Tatranská Lomnica. **Spain:** Algodor, Almería, Balmeseda, Barcelona, Bilbao, Bobadilla, Córdoba, Donostia/San Sebastián, Granada, Hendaia, Irún, Linares, Madrid, Ribes de Freser, San José (Almería)*, Sevilla, Toledo* and Vall de Núria.

PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY TRIPS

2003 – **SCR Caledonian Sleeper**, London Euston to Aberdeen (overnight on one of ScotRail's two *Caledonian Sleeper* trains, this one involving Aberdeen, Inverness and Fort William portions combined as far as Edinburgh); **SVR 1530**, Kidderminster to Bridgnorth (behind former Great Western steam locomotive No. 7114, over a highly scenic line featuring three trains operating this day); **Eurostar (UK)/SNCF 9016**, London Waterloo International to Paris Nord (non-stop through the Channel Tunnel, utilizing the new high-speed segment in England to provide a 2-hour, 41-minute journey time); **SNCF Le Côte Vermeille**, Paris Austerlitz to Perpignan (on a *Service Nuit* featuring a comfortable T2-type Sleeper, Couchette cars, and reclining-seat Coaches); **SNCF**, Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains to La Tour de Carol/Enveitg (climbing up into the Pyrenees on

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a narrow-gauge *Petit Train Jaune*); **FGC**, Ribes de Freser Enlaç to Vall de Núria (over the spectacular mountain *Cremallera*, or rack railway, operated by Ferrocarriles de la Generalitat de Catalunya, or Catalan Government Railways); **RENFE AVE 9635**, Sevilla Santa Justa to Madrid Puerta de Atocha (on a standard-gauge, high-speed, *Alta Velocidad Española* train operating over a partly mountainous line); **RENFE/CP Lusitânia**, Madrid Chamartín to Lisboa Santa Apolónia (on a RENFE Talgo train featuring 2- and 4-berth Sleeper compartments, including our shower-equipped *Gran Classe* room); **CP/RENFE Sud-Expresso/Surex**, Coimbra-B to Irún (occupying a "U"-type Sleeper on a train celebrating its centenary that year, featuring CP cars except for one RENFE Couchette vehicle); **ET**, Donostia/San Sebastián to Bilbao (over a steeply graded, meandering, interurban-like, narrow-gauge EuskoTren line called *El Topo*, or mole).

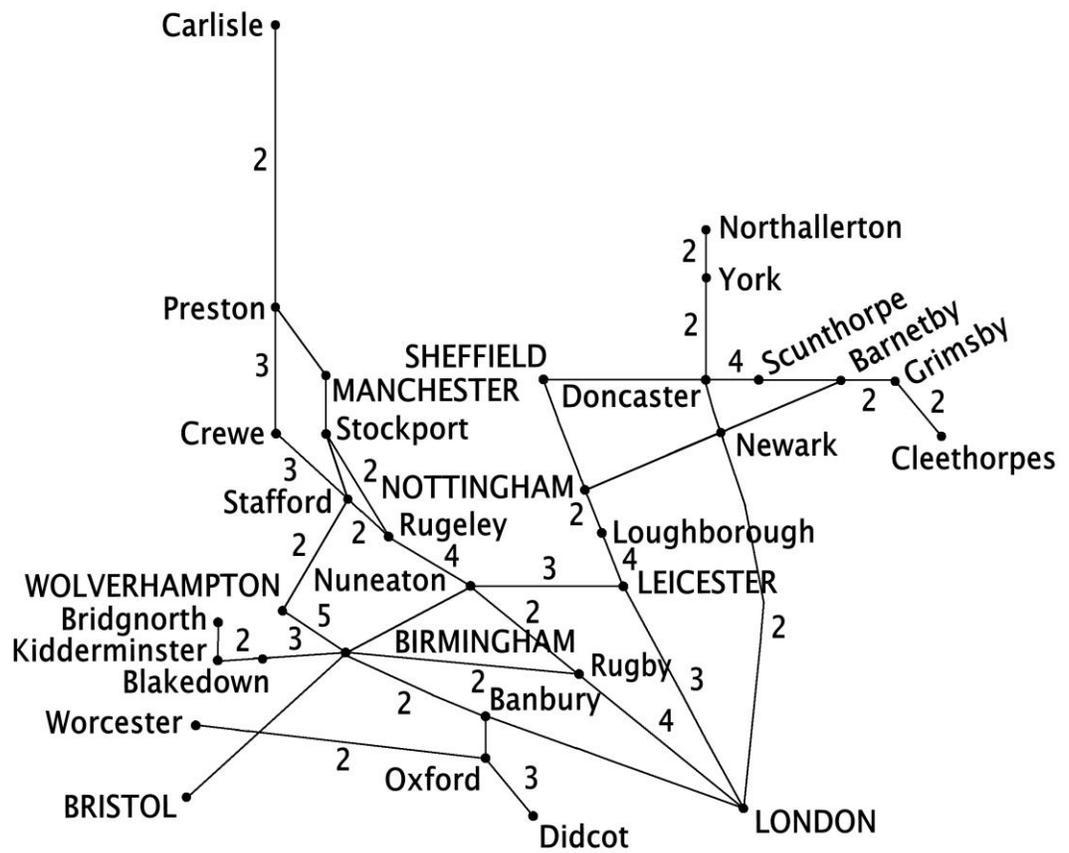
2007 – Eurostar (UK)/SNCF/SNCB 9138, London Waterloo International to Bruxelles Midi/Brussel Zuid (again through the Chunnel, this time to the Belgian capital during the final weeks before these trains were to begin using London's St. Pancras station); **DB/ČD Kopernikus**, Köln Hauptbahnhof to Praha Hlaví (its Czech Sleeping car featuring in-room showers, part of a *NachtZug* service also having Sleepers and Couchette cars to København and Ostseebad/Binz on the Baltic); **ČD/ŽSSK Excelsior**, Karlovy Vary Horní to Poprad Tatry (an overnight train running from the western to the eastern end of the old Czechoslovakia, our malfunctioning Slovak Sleeper replaced by a Czech version in Praha's main station); **TEŽ 8120**, Starý Smokovec to Šrbské Pleso (over the Tatra Electric Railway's most scenic segment); **ŽSSK/MÁV Rákóczi**, Košice to Füzesabony (our Budapest-bound express really flying after being held for late connections at Košice); **MÁV**, Hűvösvölgy to Széchenyi-hegi (a journey through the Buda Hills on the Gyermekvasút, or Children's Railway, staffed by kids except for the driver); **ÖBB/TI Allegro Don Giovanni**, Wien West to Venezia Santa Lucia (a *EuroNacht* service featuring one modern Sleeping car leased by Wagons-Lits to ÖBB, and routed via Salzburg); **TI/SNCF Palatino**, Firenze Campo di Marte to Paris Bercy (an Italian *EuroNotte* train branded "TrainHotel Artesia", with no ordinary Coaches, just Sleepers, Couchettes and a Restaurant car, routed via the Simplon Tunnel and Switzerland); **Bluebell 1342**, Horsted Keynes to Sheffield Park (on another of England's wonderful preserved railways, behind two Bullied Light Pacific steam locomotives); **FGW Night Riviera**, London Paddington to Plymouth (in a standard British SLE Sleeping car, this train normally running through to Penzance but terminating short due to "engineering works"); **VT 1403**, Newton Abbot to Preston (from the south coast into the heart of Lancashire in four-and-a-half hours, on a Voyager Diesel Multiple Unit train).

TIMINGS

... are taken from detailed trip cards, railway timetables, and Cook's Oct. 2003 and Sept. 2007 *European* timetables.

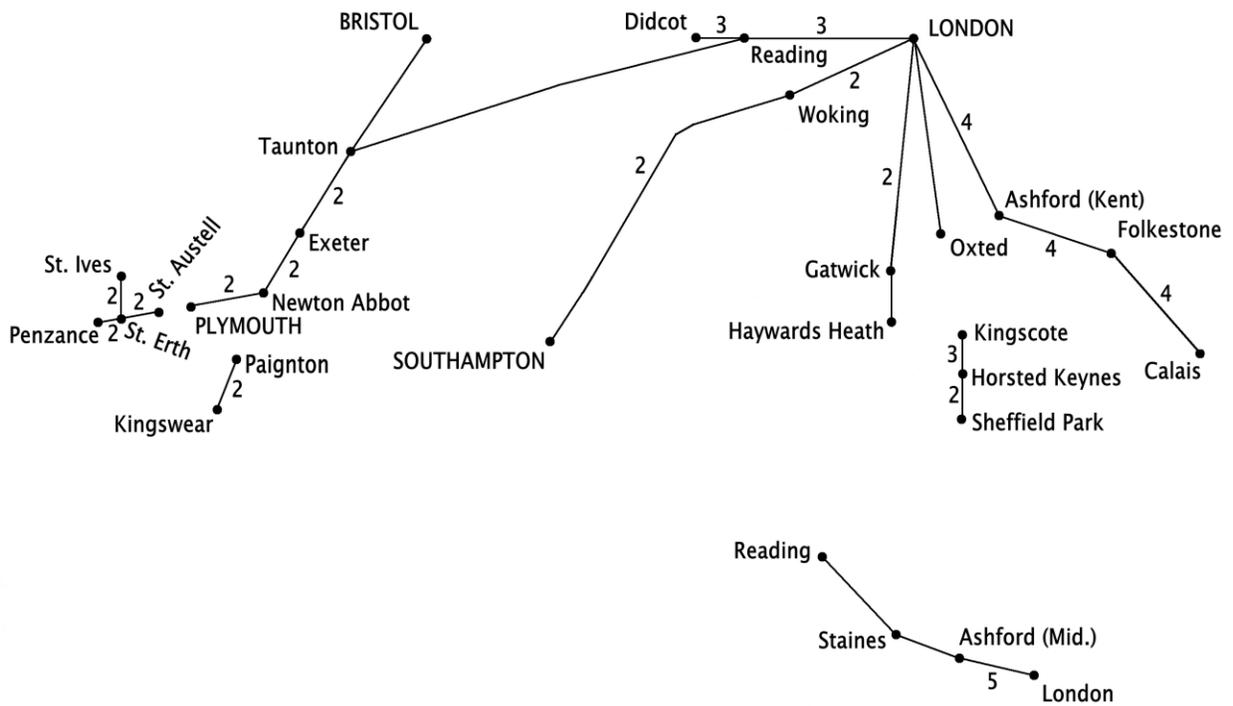
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 1A: BRITISH ISLES NORTH & MID-ENGLAND

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment: • one such trip unless shown otherwise;
•• not indicated due to space limitations: Bridgnorth-Kidderminster, 2]*



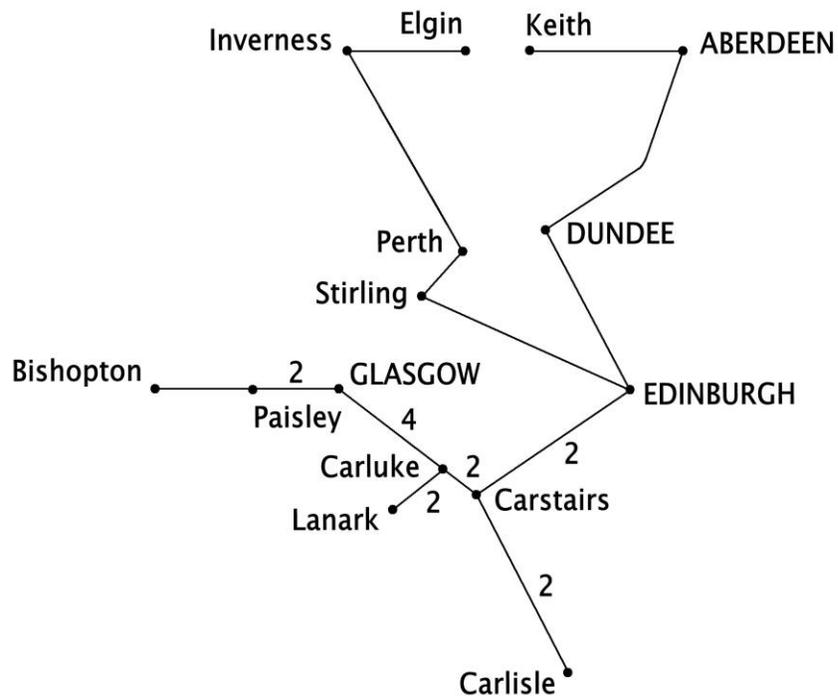
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 1B: BRITISH ISLES SOUTHERN ENGLAND

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



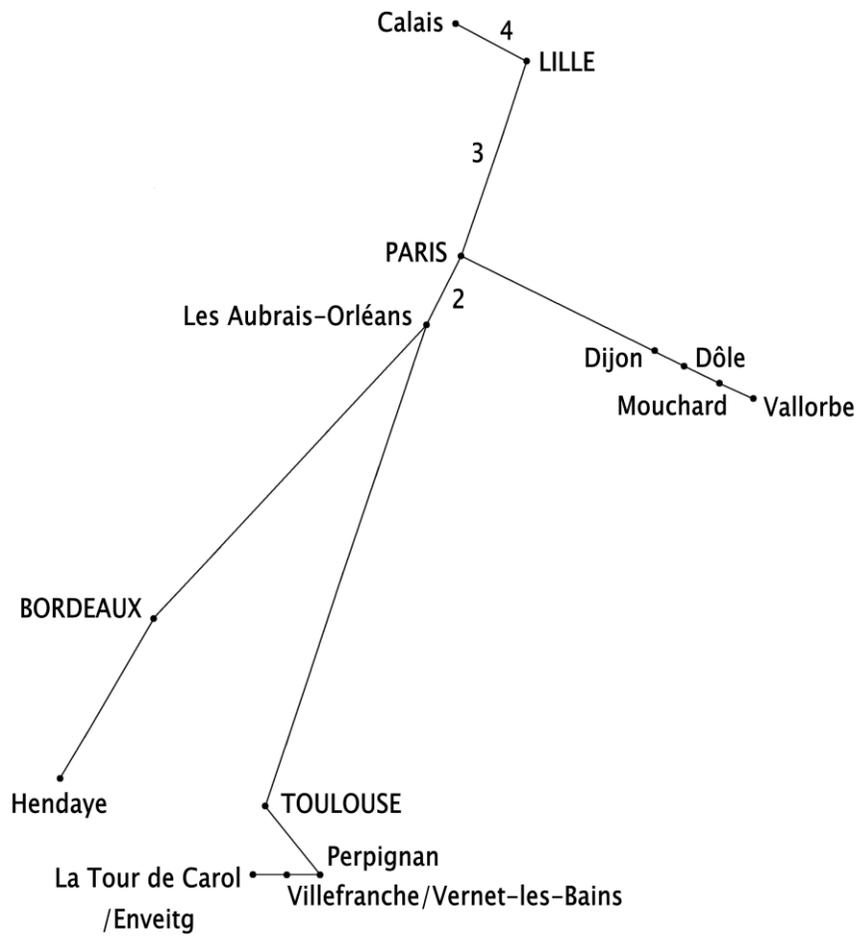
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 1C: BRITISH ISLES SCOTLAND

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



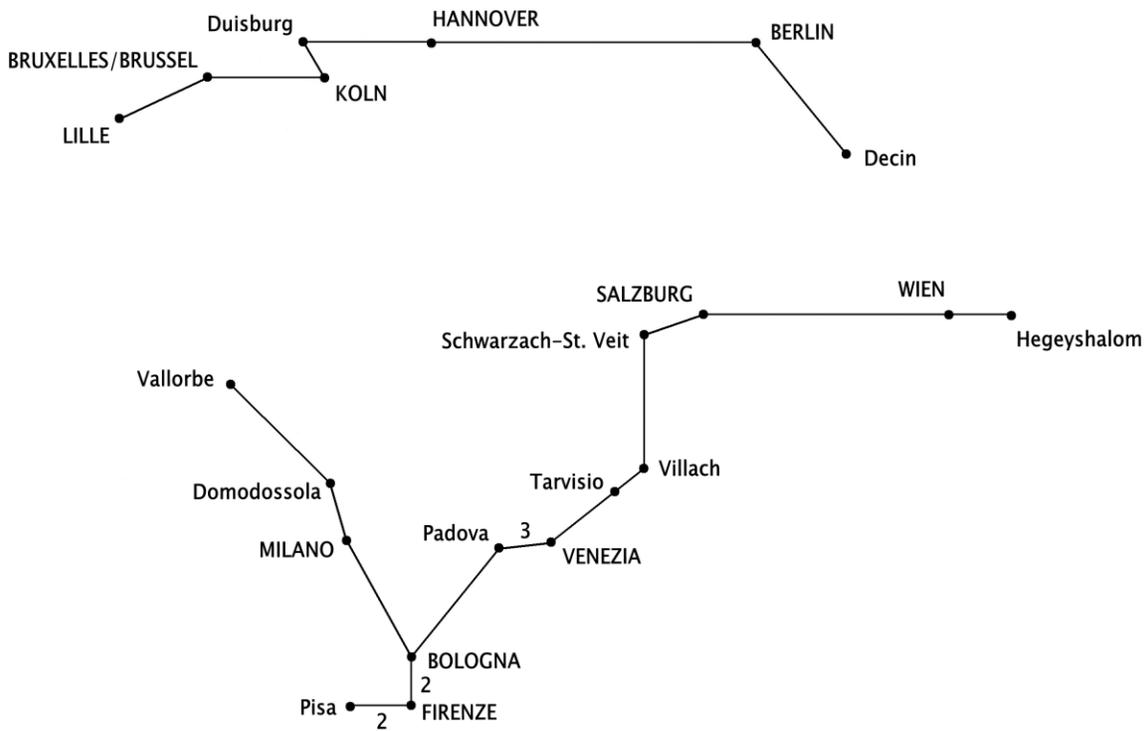
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 2A: THE CONTINENT FRANCE

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



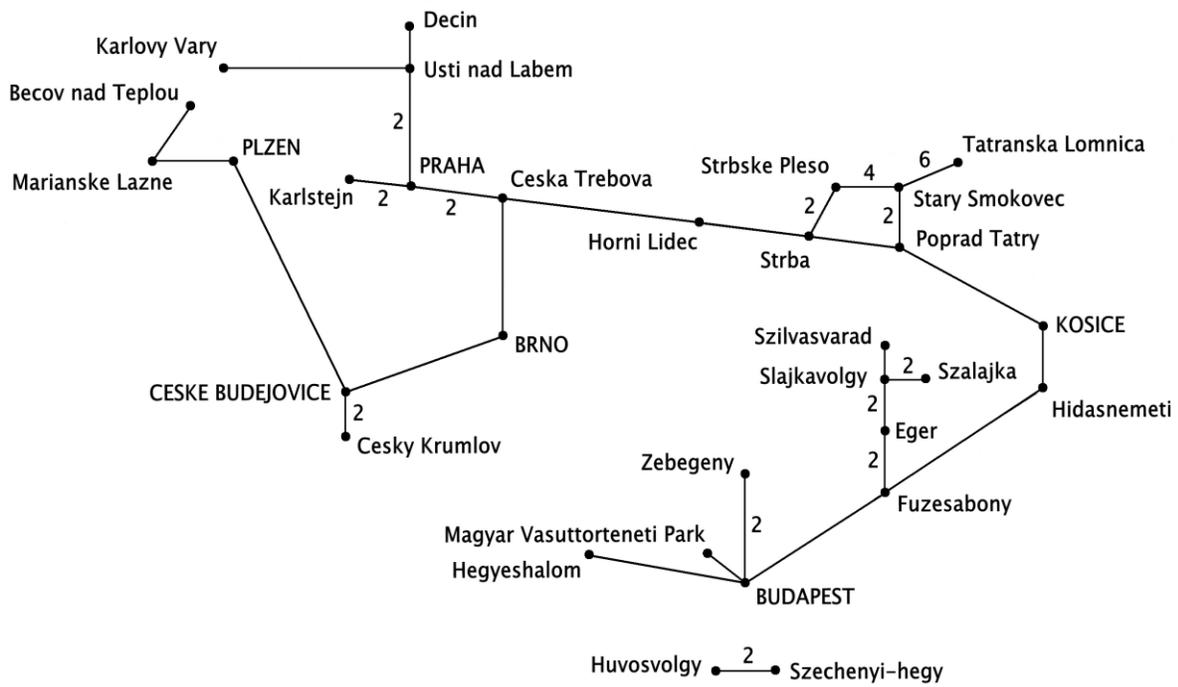
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 2B: THE CONTINENT
AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, GERMANY, ITALY & SWITZERLAND

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



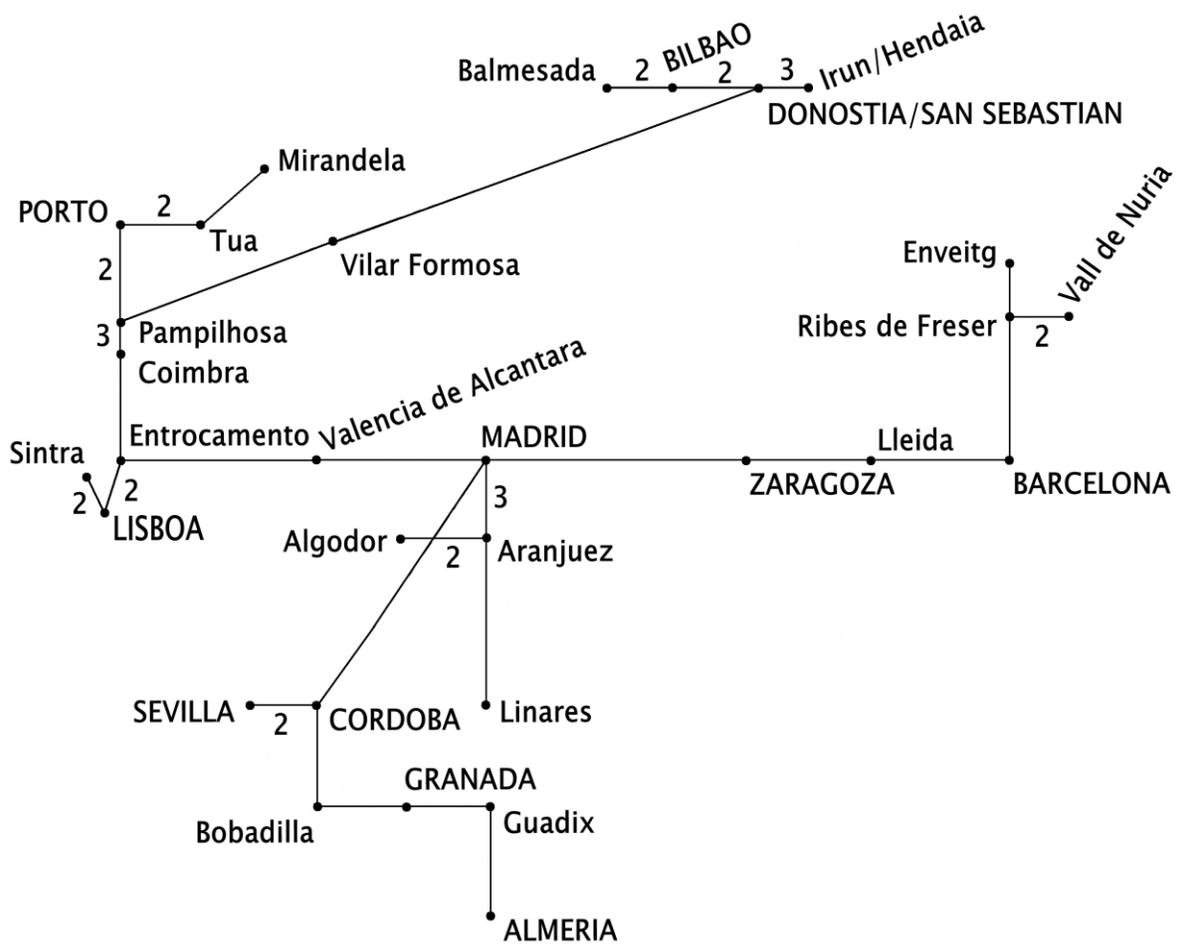
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 2C: THE CONTINENT CZECH REPUBLIC, HUNGARY & SLOVAKIA

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



ROUTE SCHEMATIC 2D: THE CONTINENT PORTUGAL & SPAIN

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



2003

*ENGLAND/SCOTLAND/FRANCE
SPAIN/PORTUGAL*



SYNOPSIS

This was my twelfth overseas holiday (seventh with Sandra), featuring most of a week on one of the last transatlantic crossings by Cunard's QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, then five weeks split equally between England and Scotland on the one hand, and France, Spain and Portugal on the other. Our home bases were at the Grantly Hotel in Shepherd's Bush, west London; Margaret Dyke & Eva Young's place in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire; Alison and David Stirling's house in Erskine, Renfrewshire; and Maria Batey's condo in San José, Andalucía, Spain. The Wagons-Lits logo on the opening page is taken from a greeting card found in the compartment of our Paris-Perpignan Sleeping car.

Trips taken: We took 66 trips covering 12,438 kilometres (7,763 miles), involving 30 in the British Isles, 21 in Spain, 9 in Portugal, and 6 in France. Fifty-nine were in my "Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges" category and 7 in "Sleeping & Couchette Cars", the latter accounting for 44% of the total distance. Thirty-eight were on locomotive hauled, compared to 28 on self-propelled trains, with the latter covering only 16% of that distance. There were 4 trips behind steam, all in England.

Equipment units: 456, made up of 62 Locomotives & Related Units and 394 cars (Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges, 310; Sleeping & Couchette Cars, 54; Restaurant & Other Meal Cars, 27; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 3).

BRITISH ISLES

Places visited in England: Ashford (Mid.), Birmingham, Bridgnorth, Brigg*, Chaddesley Corbett*, Cleethorpes*, Doncaster, Kidderminster, Leicester, London, Loughborough, Scunthorpe, Sheffield, Southampton, Stockport, Stourport*, Wolverhampton and Worcester. **Scotland:** Aberdeen, Bishopton, Dufftown*, Edinburgh, Elgin, Erskine*, Glasgow, Inverness, Keith, Lanark, New Lanark* and Paisley. (**Note:** * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: **GNER 1800**, London King's Cross to Doncaster; **SCR Caledonian Sleeper**, London Euston to Aberdeen; **GCR Elizabethan**, Loughborough Central to Leicester North; **SVR 1530**, Kidderminster to Bridgnorth; **MML 0900**, London St. Pancras to Stockport.

Fastest average speed: GNER 1800, London King's Cross to Doncaster: 176 km/h (110 mph).

Slowest: Elizabethan 1410, Leicester North to Loughborough Central: 17 km/h (11 mph).

Memorable non-rail trips: QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, New York to Southampton; taxi tour from Keith to Dufftown; and automobile excursion around Worcestershire.

THE CONTINENT

Places visited in France: Hendaye, La Tour de Carol/Enveitg, Paris, Perpignan and Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains. **Portugal:** Cacilhas*, Coimbra, Lisboa, Mirandela, Porto, Pragal, Régua, Sintra and Tua. **Spain:** Algodor, Almería, Balmeseda, Barcelona, Bilbao, Bobadilla, Córdoba, Donostia/San Sebastián, Granada, Hendaia, Irún, Linares, Madrid, Ribes de Freser, San José (Almería)*, Sevilla, Toledo* and Vall de Núria. (**Note:** * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: **ES/SNCF 9016**, London Waterloo International to Paris Nord; **SNCF Le Côte Vermeille**, Paris Austerlitz to Perpignan; **SNCF**, Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains to La Tour de Carol/Enveitg; **FGC**, Ribes de Freser Enlaç to Vall de Núria; **RENFE Antoni Gaudí**, Barcelona Sants to Madrid Chamartín; **RENFE AVE 9635**, Sevilla Santa Justa to Madrid Puerta de Atocha; **RENFE/CP Lusitânia**, Madrid Chamartín to Lisboa Santa Apolónia; **CP 6203**, Tua to Mirandela; **CP/RENFE Sud-Expresso/Surex**, Coimbra-B to Irún; **EuskoTren**, Donostia/San Sebastián to Bilbao; **FEVE**, Bilbao to Balmeseda; **SNCF La Palombe Bleue**, Hendaye to Paris Austerlitz.

Fastest average speed: RENFE AVE 9635, Sevilla Santa Justa to Madrid Puerta de Atocha: 188 km/h (117 mph). **Slowest: SNCF**, Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains to La Tour de Carol/Enveitg: 24 km/h (15 mph).

Memorable non-rail trips: by automobile from Almería along the Mediterranean to San José.

HIGHLIGHTS!

Taking *Eurostar* between London Waterloo International and Paris Nord via the Channel Tunnel – such a contrast with my four journeys between 1976 and 1980 on the train-and-boat *Night Ferry*. (This after an obvious non-rail highlight: sailing on QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 from New York to Southampton, last of the old-style transatlantic liners and still a Cunarder, if American-owned.)

MILESTONE

SNCF's decision to remove the Paris-Irún and Tarbes Sleeping cars from the *La Palombe Bleue* – and reduce the number of such cars from three to two on the Paris-Nice *Train-Bleu* – further decimated an already skeletal system of first-class overnight services within France.

Billete y Reserva **AVE**

71 CIF G28016749 0056 C5PE0802

080229372393 02110 00000000 7240

20/10/03 11:28

Nombre :

Tren	Clase	Fecha	Salida	Llegada	Coche	Plaza	Departamento
A9635	T	20/10	17.00	19.35	0008	07C	NO FUMA

SEVILLA SJ PTA. ATOCHA

402 PASES INT./INTERRAIL

Tasa de seguridad incluida
METALICO **Precio** ****9,50

EL CONTROL DE ACCESO AL TREN SE CIERRA DOS MINUTOS ANTES DE LA SALIDA Incluido SOV e IVA

[Ticket and reservation for AVE train from Sevilla Santa Justa station to Madrid Puerta de Atocha station, 2003/10/20]

TRIPS AND TRAIN COMPOSITION

- **24 SEP:** To **TORONTO** on an Air Canada Boeing 767, followed by a night at a hotel near Pearson airport;
- **25-30 SEP:** To **SOUTHAMPTON** via New York on Cunard's QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, beginning with an Airbus A319 to LaGuardia, then a fascinating bus transfer across Manhattan to Pier 90.

THE QE 2

This was the fulfillment of a life-long dream to cross the Atlantic by ship and featured: • a spectacular, late afternoon departure down the Hudson River (everyone becoming quiet when passing the location of the former World Trade towers); • six busy days exploring the last of the real ocean liners, through calm water except one day when “moderate” seas flashed by our porthole; lots of posters, models and other memorabilia recalling the Cunard glory years; lectures on TITANIC (despite the reality that we were tracing much the same route close to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland); • evening entertainment (including a “Glenn Miller Band” aimed at the sold-out, predominantly senior clientele of 1,700); and • some real eccentrics at the dinner table in the Mauretania restaurant.

1 OCT:

SWT 0855 SOUTHAMPTON CENTRAL-LONDON WATERLOO

Cme [8]

To Eva and Margaret's place in **SCUNTHORPE**, via London and Doncaster, after watching from the deck as tugs manoeuvred the great ship alongside Queen Elizabeth Ocean Terminal at 0700, then by taxi to Central station; * Depart 0855, arrive Waterloo 1027, on a South West Trains Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) local stopping at Southampton Airport Parkway, Eastleigh, Winchester, Basingstoke, Farnborough, Woking and Clapham Jct.; * We took London Underground's Northern and Piccadilly lines to St. Pancras mainline station so we could buy tickets for rail trips planned beyond the expiration date of our Brit Rail Passes, followed by the Hammersmith & City line out to Shepherds Bush to place a bag containing our QE2 finery and warmer clothes in storage at the Grantly Hotel, to pick up some pre-reserved football tickets at Queens Park Rangers' Loftus Road stadium, and to have a welcoming pint at the Bushranger pub, a popular haunt for Rangers fans; **[continued on next page]**



2000's-3: Cunard's QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 being serviced at Pier 90, New York, for her return to Southampton (2003-09-25) [SANDRA DAWES].

* Return partly by double decker bus as far as Piccadilly Circus – a wonderful way to re-acquaint oneself with the great city; * 128 km in 1 hr 32 mins, or 84 km/h (80 mls/52 mph).

GNER 1800 LONDON KING'S CROSS-DONCASTER [GLASGOW CENTRAL] E225

Ee *[91131 County of Northumberland]*

C* [7]

R

C [2]

DVT

Depart 1800, arrive 1926 non-stop, on a crowded Great North Eastern "Electric 225" service headed for Edinburgh and Glasgow, led by COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND and capped by a "Driving Van Trailer" (the latter for operation without turning the train) – this equipment having been built by British Rail Engineering Ltd. (BREL), circa 1990, for use on the recently electrified East Coast Main Line; * 251 km in 1 hr 26 mins, or 176 km/h (157 mls/110 mph); * No. 91131 (BREL, 1988-91; ex-BR, GNER 91031, GNER Sir Henry Royce/Ir-NXEC).

ATN 1920 DONCASTER-SCUNTHORPE

Cmd

Depart 1935, arrive 2015, including stops at Kirk Sandall, Hatfield & Stainforth, and Crowle, over a former Great Central Railway (GCR) line – our intended, Manchester Airport-originating connection being late, causing us to use an Arriva Trains North Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) local service which had been delayed to accommodate connecting passengers from London; * A short walk took us to Eva and Margaret's place, where we were to spend the next three nights – the following day being for nursing colds and exploring Scunthorpe's reasonably active city centre; * 37 km in 40 mins, or 55 km/h (23 mls/34 mph); • **3 OCT:** By automobile, courtesy Eva, to **Brigg** for scones and clotted cream, this part of North Lincolnshire featuring an industrial, steel-making landscape on the one hand, and picturesque countryside on the other (including the massive Humber River estuary); • **4 OCT:** By auto the short distance over to **Cleethorpes** on the North Sea with our hosts to watch Queens Park Rangers play Grimsby Town in an English Football League Division 2 game – our first experience sitting with Rangers supporters on the road made all the more delicious when the team got the winner deep into injury time, after a frantic scramble right in front of us.

5 OCT:

ATN 0908 DONCASTER-SHEFFIELD [MANCHESTER AIRPORT]

Cmd [2]

To **INVERNESS** in the Highlands of Scotland, via Sheffield, Loughborough, Leicester, London, Aberdeen, Dufftown and Elgin, starting with an automobile transfer over to Doncaster; * Depart there at 0908, arrive Sheffield 0945, with stops at Mexborough and Rotherham; * 29 km in 37 mins, or 47 km/h (18 mls/29 mph).

ARRIVA TRAINS NORTH (ATN)

... had replaced Regional Railways North East since our 1998 visit to England, one of its key routes being the one we used: Cleethorpes; Grimsby; Scunthorpe; Doncaster; Sheffield; Stockport; Manchester Piccadilly; and Manchester Airport.

MML 0958 [LEEDS] SHEFFIELD-LOUGHBOROUGH [LONDON ST. PANCRAS] HST

Ed

C [2]

BC

C* [5]

Ed

Depart 1011, arrive 1124, on a late running, Midland Mainline High Speed Train (HST), stopping at

Chesterfield, Derby and Nottingham – reversing at the latter point; * 85 km in 1 hr 13 mins, or a slow 70 km/h (53 mls/43 mph); * Class 43 (BREL, 1976-82).

MIDLAND MAINLINE

Midland Mainline now operated services between London and eastern Midland points such as Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, as well as Sheffield and Manchester beyond. Its BREL-built HST's sported various, incompatible colour schemes (some of Virgin Trains), but remained comfortable, speedy workhorses two decades after their introduction.

GCR 1315/1410 LOUGHBOROUGH CENTRAL-LEICESTER NORTH & RETURN *Elizabethan*

Es	[BR]	[63601]
R		[E3126]
BK		[E1526]
C	[3]	[E3092, E21242, W15960]

Side trip to **Leicester North** over a 13-kilometre (8-mile) stretch of the preserved GCR main line, now styled as "Britain's Double Track Main Line Steam Railway"; * Depart 1315, arrive 1354, with stops at Quorn & Woodhouse and Rothley, behind former GCR, London & North Eastern and British Railways 2-8-0 No. 63601, built in 1911 and on loan from the National Railway Museum, York; * Returning, depart 1410, arrive 1455; * 13 km in 39 mins, or 20 km/h (8 mls/12 mph), outward direction; * No. 63601 (GCRW, 1911, NRM; ex-GCR, LNER 3601, BR); * Nos. E3126 (ex-C), E1526 (ex-NYMR), E21242 (all BR, 1960-3; ex-BR).

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

The original Great Central was the last major railway built in Britain, often paralleling the long-established Midland Railway – its founder, Sir Edward Watkins, dreaming of eventually reaching Paris through a tunnel under the Channel. Instead, it was merged into the London & North Eastern in 1923 and largely abandoned during the 1960's Beeching rationalization program. *Elizabethan* offered a traditional English meal of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding on this, our anniversary, in a former Coach serving as a Dining car and supplied from a Buffet Kitchen – the only negative being a fussy steward who overly bossed around his young staff.



2000's-4: Great Central Railway's dinner train *Elizabethan* at Loughborough Central, led by No. 63601 (2003-10-05) [PETER DAWES].

MML 1604 [SHEFFIELD] LOUGHBOROUGH-LONDON ST. PANCRAS HST

Ed

C [2]

BC

C* [5]

Ed

Depart 1609, arrive 1807 on another HST, stopping at Leicester and Bedford, followed by a 10-minute walk over to Euston station and a pint at the Head of Steam pub, as we had done with Tom Clark after our *Cumbrian Mountain Express* outing in 1998 (still lots of nice railway photos on the walls, but a bit grungy now); * 180 km in 1 hr 58 mins, or 91 km/h (112 mls/57 mph).

5-6 OCT:

SCR 1958 LONDON EUSTON-ABERDEEN *Caledonian Sleeper*

Ed [EWS] EDINBURGH-ABERDEEN [67006]

Ee [RFD] LONDON-EDINBURGH [90027 Allerton T&RS Depot]

S [2] LONDON-EDINBURGH [FORT WILLIAM]

S* [4]

BL		
C		
S	[6]	LONDON-EDINBURGH [INVERNESS]
BL		"
C		"

Depart London Euston at 2040 (20 minutes late), arrive Aberdeen next morning at 0918 (almost two hours behind schedule), including stops at Watford Jct., Preston, Edinburgh (Scot.) (operational), and Dundee; * We spent the night in a comfortable SLE-type Sleeper, one of four to Aberdeen, six to Inverness and two to Fort William – along with a Coach and Buffet Lounge to each of Aberdeen and Inverness; * 856 km in 12 hrs 38 mins, or 68 km/h (534 mls/42 mph); * No. 67006 (ALS, 1999-2000/Ir-Royal Sovereign); * No. 90027 (BREL, 1987-90, EWS; ex-BR 90027, RFD 90127); * SLE Sleepers (BR, 1981-4, 13dc; ex-BR).

CALEDONIAN SLEEPERS

ScotRail continued to provide two *Caledonian Sleeper* trains behind locomotives owned by England, Welsh & Scottish Railway, in our case a Class 90 electric to Edinburgh (named for a Liverpool maintenance depot and marked for now-absorbed Railfreight Distribution), then a Class 67 diesel to Aberdeen (built in Spain by EMD-licensee, Alstom, under sub-contract to General Motors of Canada). Ordinary Coaches had been added since our 1998 holiday. At Euston, it was annoying to have to wait – amidst clouds of cigarette smoke – for our platform number to be posted on the huge electronic train boards until just a few minutes before the scheduled departure time, especially when no explanation was given over the public-address system.

6 OCT:

SCR 0925 ABERDEEN-KEITH [INVERNESS]

Cmd [2]

Depart 0925, arrive 1035, on a ScotRail DMU train calling at Dyce, Inverurie, Inch and Huntly; * We hired a cab at the station to take us to **Dufftown** in Banffshire, stopping at various churches, villages and farms known to Sandra's ancestors, and later visited the Glenfiddich Distillery and Balvenie Castle ruins in Dufftown, both located nearby the recently inaugurated, preserved Keith & Dufftown Railway (known informally as "The Whisky Line", but closed for the season); * Onward to **Elgin** by Stagecoach bus, the cathedral ruins being the big tourist attraction of this Morayshire town; * 86 km in 1 hr 10 mins, or 74 km/h (54 mls/46 mph).



2000's-5: English, Welsh & Scottish Railway diesel No. 67006 resting at Aberdeen after bringing in the *Caledonian Sleeper* from Edinburgh (2003-10-06) [PETER DAWES].

ON CRAIGELLACHIE!

Our Banffshire bus trip, from Dufftown along the beautiful River Spey to Elgin, included a brief stop at Craigellachie, the village which gave its name to the site where the last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway was driven in British Columbia.

SCR 1851 [ABERDEEN] ELGIN-INVERNESS

Cmd [4]

Depart Elgin 1851, arrive Inverness 1934, on a 4-car, ScotRail DMU, stopping at Forres and Nairn; * We stayed overnight at the excellent Balcroydon bed and breakfast, Broadstone Park road, close to a central core which had been considerably redeveloped since our 1998 visit, due to a booming regional economy; * 59 km in 43 mins, or 82 km/h (37 mls/51 km/h).

7 OCT:

GNER 0755 INVERNESS-EDINBURGH [LONDON KING'S CROSS] *Highland Chieftain* HST

Ed

C [2]

RC

C* [5]

Ed

To **ERSKINE** in Renfrewshire via Edinburgh and Glasgow, starting with a Great North Eastern HST train called *Highland Chieftain* headed for London King's Cross; * Depart 0755, arrive 1119, passing by the beautiful, snow-capped Cairngorm Mountains, including stops at places familiar from previous trips, namely Aviemore, Kingussie, Pitlochry, Perth, Gleneagles, Stirling and Falkirk; * As in 1998, Sandra's distant relative, Harry Stephen, acted as tour guide, taking us to the fascinating Parliament House and former Royal Yacht BRITANNIA, now a tourist attraction located in the rejuvenated Leith docks area – a ship that featured comfortable, rather than opulent, surroundings, as well as interesting crew quarters and steam-propulsion machinery; * 367 km in 3 hrs 24 mins, or a creditable 108 km/h (229 mls/67 mph).

OPEN ACCESS

Britain's privatized railway system allowed one Train Operating Company to operate deep into the territory dominated by another, in this case Great North Eastern serving Inverness, a city dominated by ScotRail. Here, GNER's motive was to tap the Highland-England market rather than compete for intra-Scotland business.

GNER 1910 [LONDON KING'S CROSS] EDINBURGH-GLASGOW CENTRAL E225

Ee [91118 Bradford Film Festival]

C* [7]

R

C [2]

DVT

Depart 1910, arrive Central station 2015 on a King's Cross-originating, GNER E225 service hauled by a Class 91 electric named after a film festival and calling only at Motherwell; * 92 km in 1 hr 5 mins, or 85 km/h (57 mls/53 mph); * No. 91118 (BREL, 1988-91; ex-BR, GNER 91018, GNER Robert Louis Stevenson/Ir-NXEC).

CONNECTING CONVENIENCE

GNER continued to join Edinburgh with Glasgow via Carstairs, albeit at slower trip times and much less frequency than ScotRail. In using their train, our motive was purely to arrive at Central rather than Queen Street, given that our onward train operated from the former station.

SPT 2035 GLASGOW CENTRAL-BISHOPTON [WEMYSS BAY]

Cme [3]

Depart 2035, arrive 2058, including pauses at a couple of Glasgow suburban stops and Paisley Gilmour Street, on an EMU operated by ScotRail for Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive; * We spent the night in nearby Erskine at Alison and David's place, she having picked us up at the train; * 20 km in 23 mins, or 53 km/h (12 mls/33 mph).

8 OCT:

SPT 1048/1522 [DALMUIR] GLASGOW CENTRAL-LANARK & RETURN

Cme [3]

[Return: 334 011]

Day excursion to **NEW LANARK** to visit the preserved mill town, starting with an SPT bus into Glasgow Central; * Depart subsequently from the low-level station at 1048, arrive Lanark 1143 on a 3-car, Class 334 Juniper EMU train built by Alstom, including stops at Belshill, Motherwell and Carluke, briefly joining the West Coast Main Line before leaving it as Carstairs approached; * We walked to the nearby town, established in the late 19th century as a model industrial community by Robert Owen, a pioneer in the British co-operative movement; * Return by shuttle bus to the station, then depart 1527 and arrive Glasgow Central 1617; * 46 km in 50 mins, or 55 km/h (29 mls/34 mph), return trip; * No. 334 011 (ALS, 2000).

CLYDE MEMORIES

Our bus trip along the south bank of the Clyde featured a strip of land that was once the site of several flourishing shipbuilders, including Fairfield's of Govan, builder of the EMPRESS OF JAPAN (later renamed EMPRESS OF SCOTLAND) and many other fine ships for the CPR. Much of the area remained derelict in 2003.

SPT 1630 GLASGOW CENTRAL-PAISLEY GILMOUR STREET [AYR]

Cme [6]

Depart 1630, arrive 1640 non-stop, then by SPT bus back to Alison and David's – the latter rescuing us from Erskine town centre after we'd overshot our stop.

8-9 OCT:

SCR 2341 GLASGOW CENTRAL-LONDON EUSTON *Caledonian Sleeper*

Ee [EWS] [90034]

C

BL

S* [6]

C [EDINBURGH] CARSTAIRS-LONDON

BL

S [6]

To **WOLVERHAMPTON**, West Midlands, via London, departing Glasgow Central 2341, arriving Euston 0735 next morning, including stops at Carlisle and Watford Jct. – David having driven us back into the city; * We occupied one of 12 Sleepers, six out of Glasgow and a like number joining at Carstairs from Edinburgh; * 646 km in 7 hrs 54 mins, or 82 km/h (403 mls/51 mph); * No. 90034 (BREL, 1987-90, EWS; ex-BR 90034, RFD 90134).

9 OCT:

VT 0745 LONDON EUSTON-WOLVERHAMPTON

Ee [87030 Black Douglas]

C* [5]

R

C [3]

DVT [82126 G8 Summit Birmingham 1998]

Depart 0745, arrive 0950, with stops at Milton Keynes, Coventry, Birmingham (International and New Street), also Sandwell & Dudley, on a Virgin Trains service hauled by a Class 87 electric built by BREL in 1974, with a Driving Van Trailer at the rear to obviate the need for turning at destination; * We spent the morning looking up Mom's childhood row house in this "Black Country" city, regenerating after its heavy industrial past and boasting of the recently opened Midland Metro Light Rail Transit line running from the heart of the city to Birmingham, some 20 kilometres (12 miles) to the south; * We met a well-known local

tour operator/character, Richard James (nicknamed “Grorty Dick”), in a Viennese-style cafe (yes, in Wolverhampton!), Grorty’s mission being to promote old-time Black Country food and drink; * Our QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 dinner mates, Richard and Sylvia, then showed us around the beautiful Worcestershire countryside in their Jaguar, including the old locks and basins at **Stourport** that once were part of an extensive, pre-railway British canal system, then treated us to dinner in their converted barn near the quaintly named village of **Chaddesley Corbett**; * 202 km in 2 hrs 5 mins, or 97 km/h (126 mls/60 mph); * Nos. 87030 (1974), 82126 (1988) (both BREL; ex-BR).

VIRGIN’S BLACK COUNTRY

Richard Branson still controlled two franchises marketed as Virgin Trains: West Coast and Cross Country. Our 0745 Euston-Wolverhampton train was headed by electric locomotive BLACK DOUGLAS, a name having nothing to do with the Black Country but rather Sir James Douglas, a Scot who fought in the 14th century Wars of Independence. There was a Driving Van Trailer on the rear, named – apparently in defiance of the anti-globalization protesters – after a 1998 G8 summit.

TT 2057 [GREAT MALVERN] WORCESTER SHRUB HILL-LONDON PADDINGTON

Cmd [2]

Depart 2118, arrive 2331, on a late running, 2-car Thames Trains DMU, including stops at Evesham, Moreton-in-Marsh, Oxford, Reading and Slough, then back to our Shepherds Bush hotel for three nights, by means of the Hammersmith & City line; * 194 km in 2 hrs 13 mins, or 87 km/h (121 mls/54 mph).

THAMES TRAINS

... was yet another new Train Operating Company since our 1998 trip, in the case of our train, operating over former Great Western lines via Oxford and Reading.

10 OCT:

SWT 1328/2202 LONDON WATERLOO-ASHFORD [WINDSOR & ETON RIVERSIDE] & RETURN

Cme [4/8]

Day excursion to **ASHFORD**, Middlesex, to visit cousin Kitty and family, departing 1328, arriving 1402, on an SWT DMU suburban train, including stops at Vauxhall, Clapham Jct., Richmond and Twickenham, using the Central and Bakerloo lines to reach Waterloo; * The usual fine meal and hospitality ensued,

Kitty providing me with a bunch of interesting letters her mother (my aunt) had exchanged with Dad and Mom during World War II; * Returning, depart 2202, arrive Waterloo 2234; * 28 km in 32 mins, or 53 km/h (17 mls/33 mph), return trip.

11 OCT:

VT 1035 LONDON EUSTON-BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET [WOLVERHAMPTON]

Ee [87024 Lord of the Isles]

C* [5]

R

C [2]

DVT

To **KIDDERMINSTER** via Birmingham, to ride the preserved Severn Valley Railway, starting with the Central and Victoria lines to Euston, then the same Virgin route we'd taken two mornings earlier, departing Euston 1035, arriving Birmingham 1315.

CAUTION RULES THE DAY

Hauled by Class 87 electric LORD OF THE ISLES, our 1035 Euston-Birmingham train was delayed 45 minutes at Watford Jct. while maintenance staff checked a tunnel ahead for a possible broken rail – this, the result of heightened concern after a couple of serious rail accidents in Britain in recent years.

CT 1343 BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET-KIDDERMINSTER [WORCESTER SHRUB HILL]

Cmd [2]

Depart 1343, arrive 1414, on a Central Trains DMU, including stops at Stourbridge Jct. and Hagley; * 34 km in 31 mins, or 65 km/h (21 mls/40 mph).

SVR 1530/1715 KIDDERMINSTER-BRIDGNORTH & RETURN

Es [GWR] [7714]

C [6] [1146,1087,7284,5883,1116,829]

We took the Severn Valley Railway along this former Great Western line to **Bridgnorth** and back, after enjoying a sunny hour on the Kidderminster concourse watching an unlikely combination of Morris Dancers from Stoke-on-Trent (these being blokes who travelled around in English folk costumes, entertaining at markets and other

venues) and football supporters having a pint from the station pub before moving on to the match; * Depart 1530, arrive 26 minutes late at 1705, following the scenic River Severn and pausing at Bewdley, Arley, Highley and Hampton Load; * Returning, depart 1728, arrive 10 minutes late at 1828; * 26 km in a scheduled 1 hr, or 26 km/h (16 mls/16 mph), return direction; * No. 7714 (KS, 1930; ex-GWR, BR, NCB), running backwards outbound; * No. 7284 (GWRW, 1941, GWSV; ex-BR 079156, 99236).

ON THE SEVERN VALLEY

Ex-Great Western, BR and National Coal Board 0-6-0 tank No. 7714 hauled our train between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth – one of 863 such locomotives built mainly by GWR in its own shops, but also by other manufacturers (such as Kerr Stuart in the case of 7714). Our outward train was 25 minutes behind schedule after Bewdley, due to a late running service in the other direction; but, all in all, this was one of the best of English preserved railways, with three trains operating over the single track line that afternoon.

CT 1835 [GREAT MALVERN] KIDDERMINSTER-BIRMINGHAM SNOW HILL [DORRIDGE]

Cmd [2]

Return to **LONDON** via Birmingham, dashing over to the adjacent mainline Kidderminster station for our Central Trains departure at 1835, arriving Snow Hill station at 1919.

CHT 2010 BIRMINGHAM SNOW HILL-LONDON MARYLEBONE

Cmd [2]

Depart 2010, arrive Marylebone 2235, on a 2-car Chiltern Trains DMU, including stops at Solihull, Warwick, Leamington Spa, Banbury and High Wycombe – most of these places familiar due to the *Shakespeare Limited/Express* we took several times with our old friend, Tom Clark; * Back to Shepherd's Bush by Metropolitan and Hammersmith & City lines; * 180 km in 2 hrs 25 mins, or 74 km/h (112 mls/46 mph).

CHILTERN TRAINS

Although mainly a provider of suburban services from places such as Aylesbury, Wendover and High Wycombe into London, Chiltern was now operating an hourly Birmingham Snow Hill-Marylebone service – its trains taking around 50 minutes longer than Virgin's, end-to-end. Snow Hill was the old Great Western station in Birmingham, revived in recent years mainly to serve commuters passengers.



2000's-6: Former Great Western and BR 0-6-0 tank engine No. 7714 heading back to hook onto our train after servicing at Bridgnorth, other locomotives under steam in the background (2003/10/11 [PETER DAWES]).

12 OCT:

ES/SNCF 9016 LONDON WATERLOO INTERNATIONAL-PARIS NORD Eurostar

Ee [3223]
C* [5]
CfL
C [6]
CfL
C [5]
Ee

To **RIBES DE FRESER** in Catalunya, Spain, via Paris, Perpignan, Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains, and La Tour de Carol/Enveitg, starting with Central and Bakerloo lines to Waterloo; * Depart 1012, arrive Paris Nord 1353 non-stop, leaving five minutes later than scheduled due to the recent opening of some high-speed trackage in England [**equipment owned by Eurostar (UK)**]; * Métro Line 5 took us over to Gare d'Austerlitz, where we stored our packs before spending the afternoon in the Musée d'Orsay, an art museum housed in a station

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2003

formerly owned by the Chemin de fer de Paris à Orléans, prior to World War II home to the *Sud-Express* and other famous trains connecting the capital with southwestern France; * Evening found us in the artsy Saint-Germain-des-Prés district, sipping coffee at outrageously expensive sidewalk cafes such as Les Deux Magots, after which we walked along the west bank of the Seine and back to Austerlitz; * 49 km in 2 hrs 41 mins, or 184 km/h (308 mls/115 mph), taking into account the 1-hour time difference; * No. 3223 (GECAL, 1993).

EUROSTAR, LONDON-PARIS

... was operated by Eurostar (UK) and SNCF (Société nationale des chemins de fer Français/French National Railways), over Channel Tunnel Rail Link in England (using a high-speed segment between Gravesend and Dover), Eurotunnel under the Channel, and SNCF's TGV Nord line in France – the underwater segment taking approximately 30 minutes. Built a decade earlier by GEC-Alstom (and made up of 18 cars and 2 locomotives), our almost sold-out train essentially was an undersized TGV designed to fit the narrow British loading gauge. It featured a standard class in comfortable if rather functional Coaches (supported by Cafe Lounges) and 1st class (offering meals at-seat). Eurailpass holders benefitted from a special "Passholder" fare.

12-13 OCT:

SNCF 3731 PARIS AUSTERLITZ-PERPIGNAN [PORT BOU] *Le Côte Vermeille*

Ee

T [6]

S [61 87 75-71 142-6]

C [3]

C [3] PARIS-TOULOUSE [LA TOUR DE CAROL/ENVEITG]

T [3] "

Depart 2156, arrive 0721 next morning on *Le Côte Vermeille*, including stops at Les Aubrais-Orléans, Vierzon, Limoges, Toulouse (operational), Castelnaudary, Carcassonne, Lézignan and Narbonne, in a T2 Sleeping car built some three decades earlier by Waggon- und Maschinenbau Donauwörth; * *Le Train-Bleu* had left earlier for the Riviera, no longer calling Gare de Lyon home (perhaps because the platforms of the latter were fully needed by the ever-expanding TGV network); * 926 km in 9 hrs 25 mins, or 98 km/h (578 mls/61 mph); * No. 61 87 75-71 142-6 (WMD, 1968-72, 18dc; ex-CIWL).

LE CÔTE VERMEILLE

Destined for the Spanish border at Port Bou, the “Rose Coast” was combined with another portion going directly to our eventual destination of La Tour de Carol/Enveitg on the Spanish border. Our preference was the Port Bou portion, because it would enable us to take SNCF trains from Perpignan on the Mediterranean up into the Pyrenees, including the narrow-gauge *Le Petit Train Jaune*. (Cook’s is unclear as to where the two portions split during the night, although Toulouse seems the most likely location.)

SERVICE NUIT

Where *Le Côte Vermeille* was concerned, SNCF called both the Port Bou and La Tour de Carol/Enveitg portions *Service Nuit*, a now-standard overnight product offering platform check-in, onboard host, reclining-seat Coaches, first- and second-class Couchettes (one of the latter fitted out with an area for bicycles), and sometimes an 18-compartment, T2-type Sleeping car (in this case, only the Port Bou portion offered a Sleeper). Our T2 car was comfortable and quiet, partly because both berths were located well above floor level (and therefore the tracks), on either side of a common area housing a couch and sink. Accor travel group subsidiary Wagons-Lits continued to staff SNCF Sleeping cars.

13 OCT:

SNCF 77653 PERPIGNAN-VILLEFRANCHE/VERNET-LES-BAINS

C [3]

Ee

Operated by SNCF for the Languedoc-Roussillon regional council, this local train was scheduled to depart at 0747 and arrive 0841, including a stop at Prades/Molitg-les-Bains, but actually left at 0824 for undisclosed reasons and arrived at 0922; * It was standing-room only, due to a large number of teenaged school children, including a boy who tried to impress the girls by setting papers on fire and throwing them out the window; * 46 km in 58 mins, or 47 km/h (29 mls/29 mph).



2000's-7: One Petit Train Jaune meets another at a station somewhere between Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains and La Tour de Carol/Enveitg (2003/10/13) [PETER DAWES].

SNCF VILLEFRANCHE/VERNET-LES-BAINS-LA TOUR DE CAROL/ENVEITG *Le Petit Train Jaune*

Cme [4]

Scheduled to depart at 0905 and arrive 1138, this train was held for our Perpignan local and left at 0934, pulling in at 1210, including stops at Mount Louis-La Cabanasse, Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via, and Bourg-Madame; * 63 km in 2 hrs 36 mins, or 24 km/h (39 mls/15 mph).

LE PETIT TRAIN JAUNE AND LA TOUR DE CAROL/ENVEITG

The “Little Yellow Train” was a narrow-gauge, third-rail electric affair climbing from Villefranche/Vernet-les-Bains up to La Tour de Carol/Enveitg (“Enveitg” being the Catalan name for this recreational border town). Both the town and the train were sparsely populated during this fall season.



2000's-8: Three gauges at La Tour de Carol/Enveitg: wide gauge RENFE Barcelona train (*left*); standard gauge SNCF Paris train (*right*); and narrow gauge SNCF Le Petit Train Jaune (*centre, in the background*) (2003/10/13) [PETER DAWES].

RENFE LA TOUR DE CAROL/ENVEITG-RIBES DE FRESER [BARCELONA SANTS]

PCe [239M]

C*

Depart 1319, arrive 1415 on a wide gauge train operated by Red Nacional de los Ferrocarriles Españoles (Spanish National Railways), including stops at Puigcerdà and La Molina; * Our home for one night was Hotel Els Caçadors, where we encountered a menu that was in the Catalan language with no translations – resulting in my ordering the special, *Peu de porc*, which turned out, not to be a “little bit of pork”, but rather a lot of pork skin, grease and no meat at all; * 39 km in 56 mins, or 42 km/h (24 mls/26 mph; * No. 239M (*details unavailable*).

FGC RIBES DE FRESER ENLAÇ/VILA-VALL DE NÚRIA & RETURN *Cremallera*

Cme [2] [A7 Taga]



2000's-9: FGC (Catalan Government Railways) narrow-gauge *Cremallera* at Vall de Núria, having arrived from Ribes de Freser (2003/10/13) [PETER DAWES].

Late afternoon side trip up to the **Vall de Núria** ski and recreational centre, departing 1656 from Vila station nearby the hotel and arriving 1730, with one stop at Queralbs; * This was a 2-car EMU train operated by Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government Railways); * Returning, depart 1740, arrive 1820, this time to the end of the line at Enlaç station, adjacent to RENFE; * 12 km in 34 mins, or 21 km/h (7 mls/13 mph), ascending direction; * No. A7 (SLM, 1985).

EL CREMALLERA

... was a rack railway in Catalunya, reminiscent of a Swiss mountain railway with steep grades up to 15%, tunnels, rushing streams, waterfalls and spectacular scenery. Schweizerische Lokomotiv- und Maschinenfabrik built the cars back in 1985.

14 OCT:

RENFE [LA TOUR DE CAROL/ENVEITG] RIBES DE FRESER-BARCELONA SANTS

C RIPOLI-BARCELONA

PCe "
 C "
 PCe "
 C
PCe

To **BARCELONA**, departing 0927, arriving 1140 on a RENFE regional train operating some 13 minutes late throughout its run down from the Pyrenees, including stops at Ripoli (to add two more, 2-car sets), Vic and Plaça de Catalunya; * By Metro to L'Universitat station (Lines 3 and 1), after obtaining transit passes and future seat reservations – the latter needed on most Spanish intercity trains; * We could have left the train at Plaça de Catalunya and walked to nearby Hostal Central, located on Ronda de L'Universitat, our home for one night; * By foot during the afternoon and evening to explore La Rambla (main pedestrian street), the port (with its impressive monument to Columbus), Barri Gòtic (Gothic district), cathedral, city museum and market; * 124 km in 2 hrs 13 mins, or 56 km/h (77 mls/35 mph).

15-16 OCT:

RENFE 875 BARCELONA SANTS-MADRID CHAMARTÍN *Antoni Gaudí*

Ee [252-061-7]
 A
 U
 C [3]
 L
 R
S* [4]
 U

To the Spanish capital of **MADRID**, after spending the day visiting the Picasso museum and several attractions built by the famous “Modernista” architect, Antoni Gaudí (including Catedral de la Sagrada Familia, Parc Güell, and combined apartment-office block, La Pedrera) – also Tibidabo hill overlooking the city (although the best way to gain access, Barcelona’s last tram line, the *Tranvía Blau* or Blue Tram, wasn’t operating that day); * We took Metro lines 1 and 3 to Estació Sants around 2130 hours, then endured an uncomfortable wait surrounded by hordes of cigarette, pipe and cigar smokers – Spain appearing to have a high rate of tobacco addiction, especially amongst younger people; * Depart 2300, arrive Madrid Chamartín next morning at 0800, on the appropriately called *Antoni Gaudí*, including stops

at Tarragona, Reus, Lleida, Zaragoza, Calatayud and Guadalajara, behind a Class 252 electric built in 1992 by Alstom and Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (CAF); * Then by Madrid Metro (Lines 10 and 1) to Antón Martín station to deposit our packs at our home for two nights, Hostal R. Casanova (no kidding!), Lope de Vega street; * 716 km in 9 hrs, or 80 km/h (447 mls/50 mph); * No. 252-061-7 (ALS/CAF, 1992); * Sleepers TWL4d/g/u (TAL, 1983-7, 11dc5qc).

HOTEL TRAIN

Antoni Gaudí was a Talgo Pendular “Hotel” train featuring Generator cars at either end, three Coaches, Restaurant and Lounge cars, an *Autoexpreso* car for those wishing to avoid the long drive between Spain’s two largest cities, and four roomy, comfortable, articulated, TWL-type *Coches Camas*, each with eleven, 2-berth and five, 4-berth compartments. Our attendant correctly realized we couldn’t speak Spanish, took our Eurailpasses and reservation slips, and disappeared without explaining where the towels and other amenities were hidden, or how the various gadgets worked in this unfamiliar equipment.

16 OCT:

RENFE 7058/7069 [MADRID CHAMARTÍN] ATOCHA CERCANÍAS-ALGODOR & RETURN

C* [2]

PCe

Day excursion to **TOLEDO**, departing Atocha Cercanías (regional) station at 1028, stopping at Aranjuez, Castillejo and Añover before reaching Algodor at 1124 – changing there to buses for the final stretch, arriving 1147; * We visited the major attractions, including the Santo Tomé church (housing El Greco’s famous painting, “The Burial of the Count of Orgaz”), the Jewish Quarter, Muslim sector, and finally the Alcázar – no mean feat on this rainy day in a medieval city with narrow, highly confusing alleyways; * Returning, depart Toledo by bus at 1842, Algodor by train at 1909, and arrive Atocha Cercanías 12 minutes late at 2009; * 70 km in 56 mins, or 75 km/h (44 mls/47 mph), rail portion outward.

NEW HIGH SPEED LINE

Our Toledo train went only as far as Algodor, due to the construction of a new high-speed line between Madrid and the capital of Castillo-La Mancha.

17 OCT:

RENFE 276 MADRID CHAMARTÍN-LINARES *Talgo*

Ee	[269-409-9]
U	
Y	
C*	[2]
CfL	
C	[3]
U	MADRID-LINARES [GRANADA]
Y	"
C	[2] "
CfL	"
C	[3] "

To **SAN JOSÉ** via Almería (located in Andalucía's easternmost province of the same name) to stay with our friend Maria, starting with a Metro transfer (Lines 1 and 10) to Estació Chamartín, rather than board this train at nearby Atocha Cercanías – simply to make for a less hurried departure, easier consist-taking, and perhaps some photography; * Depart five minutes late at 0815 on a 1960's-era Talgo day train, hauled by a Class 269 electric constructed by CAF in the early 1980's, stopping at Atocha Cercanías and Alcázar de San Juan, passing by vast grain fields and olive orchards along the way, and arriving in Linares at 1124 – then by bus to Almería, arriving 1435; * We drove the roughly 30 kilometres (19 miles) onward to San José in a car rented by Maria, owner of a condominium in this beautiful resort located on the Mediterranean – this, and our return two days later, being the only times I'd ever driven a vehicle in Europe; * Maria took us on foot to Los Genoveses beach, and we later watched from her balcony as cargo and cruise vessels sailed by, some distance out to sea, on their way to or from Gibraltar; * 323 km in 3 hrs 9 mins, or 103 km/h (202 mls/64 mph), rail portion only; * No. 269-409-9 (CAF/MIT, 1980-4); * Talgo cars (TAL, 1964); **[continued on next page]**

FROM TALGO TO BUS

The front half of RENFE Talgo No. 276 was destined for Almería, the rear for Granada. Those of us in the former were told at the last minute that we would have to change to buses at the dividing point of Linares, due to unspecified problems with the line onward to Almería – leaving no time to visit the washroom or obtain lunch.



2000's-10: RENFE Talgo No. 276 ready to depart Madrid Chamartín station, front portion for Almería, rear for Granada, with author's wife in the second window (2003/10/17) [PETER DAWES].

* Next day, we spent the morning exploring the town, then drove to Monsul beach for a swim in the Mediterranean surf, we being practically the only persons wearing any clothing – the evening finding us enjoying a lovely evening meal at Restaurante Las Cueva, featuring the usual adventures in ordering some lovely fish delicacies from a unilingual Spanish menu.

19 OCT:

RENFE 3943 ALMERÍA-GRANADA [SEVILLA SANTA JUSTA] TRD

Cmd [2]

To **GRANADA**, starting with an automobile transfer back to Almería; * Depart there at 0910, arrive 1119 on a 2-car TRD (*Tren Regional Diesel*), stopping only at Guadix; * We walked to the Hostal Meridiano to check in for one night and deposit our packs, then it was up to the Alhambra fortress built by the Moors

and taken over later by Christians, with its adjacent Generalife gardens – a World Heritage Site so popular that advance reservations were required; * We booked tickets to attend a flamenco evening arranged for tourists in hillside caves, only to have the shuttle bus go right past us at the pick-up point; * 181 km in 2 hrs 9 mins, or 84 km/h (113 mls/52 mph).

OVER THE SIERRA NEVADA

Our Almería-Granada DMU climbed from sea level up and over the Sierra Nevada mountains, utilizing the Madrid line for much of the way north – highly recommended for anyone who likes spectacular, dry mountain scenery.

20 OCT:

RENFE 3064 GRANADA-BOBADILLA [ALGECIRAS] Andalucía Exprés

Cmd [3]

To LISBOA, Portugal, via Bobadilla, Córdoba, Sevilla and Madrid; * Depart 0700, arrive Bobadilla 15 minutes late at 0912, on a 3-car DMU marked *Andalucía Exprés* destined for points south to Algeciras, stopping only at Antequera to take passengers from a Sevilla-Granada/Almería train – our car featuring a noisy and smelly overhead engine; * 123 km in 2 hrs 12 mins, or 56 km/h (77 mls/35 mph).

RENFE 9117 [MÁLAGA] BOBADILLA-CÓRDOBA [MADRID PUERTA DE ATOCHA] T200

Ee MÁLAGA-CÓRDOBA [269-411]
 Ee [AVE] CÓRDOBA-MADRID [252-???-?]
 U
 C [2]
 RL
 C* [6]
 U

Depart 0930, arrive 1058, on a packed, “T200” Talgo Pendular train stopping at Puente Genil and Montilla; * 124 km in 1 hr 28 mins, or 84 km/h (77 mls/52 mph); * Class 252 (ALS/CAF, 1992); * Talgo 200 (TAL, 1980).



2000's-11: Panoramic view of Granada, with the Sierra Nevada mountains in the background (2003/10/19) [SANDRA DAWES].

FROM WIDE TO INTERNATIONAL GAUGE

RENFE No. 9117 originated at Málaga and was destined for Madrid Puerta de Atocha over the high-speed AVE line, requiring an operational stop at a facility just short of Córdoba station where the wheels were adjusted to “international” (for us, standard) gauge, and where the conventional electric locomotive was replaced by another marked for AVE.

RENFE 3032 CÓRDOBA-SEVILLA SANTA JUSTA *Andalucía Exprés*

C* [2]

PCe

Depart 1335, arrive 1456 over the original, wide gauge RENFE line, including stops at Palma del Río and Lora del Río, on another *Andalucía Exprés* passing through heavily irrigated farmland – our purpose

being to experience the AVE high-speed line all the way from Sevilla to Madrid (not just from Córdoba), and frankly to take a rest from visiting tourist sites, as wonderful as they are in Spain!; * 129 km in 1 hr 21 mins, or 96 km/h (81 mls/60 mph).

RENFE 9635 SEVILLA SANTA JUSTA-MADRID PUERTA DE ATOCHA AVE

Ee [14]

C [4]

CfL

C* [6]

Ee

Depart 1700, arrive 1930, with stops at Córdoba, Puertollano and Ciudad Real, on an almost sold-out AVE train;

* We went for a walk along nearby streets crowded with noisy, smelly vehicles and hordes of pedestrians (still like this at 2000 hours in the evening), enjoyed a meal near Antón Martín Metro, then took Lines 1 and 10 to Chamartín station; * 471 km in 2 hrs 30 mins, or 188 km/h (294 mls/117 mph); * No. 14 (GECAL/CAF, 1992).

AVE HIGH SPEED LINE AND PUERTA DE ATOCHA STATION

AVE (*Alta Velocidad Española*) was based on the French TGV but built in Spain at CAF in the early 1990's – most impressive at 188 km/h (117 mph), including three stops, a comfortable ride over the spectacular Sierra Morena and through Las Tablas de Daimiel national park – the only quibble being the 4-seat facing arrangement and limited legroom. RENFE's other mainline Madrid station, Puerta de Atocha, included a magnificent, fully restored train shed now functioning as a commercial area and atrium. Alas, the approach to this and the adjacent Cercanías regional station would be the scene of the March, 2004 terrorist attack on RENFE suburban trains that killed over 200 passengers.



[Billete y Reserva,
Oct. 20, 2003]



2000's-12: AVE high-speed trains lined up in Sevilla's Santa Justa station, waiting to return to Madrid (2003/10/20) [PETER DAWES].

20-21 OCT:

RENFE/CP 332 MADRID CHAMARTÍN-LISBOA SANTA APOLÓNIA Lusitânia

Ed		MADRID-VALENCIA DE ALCÁNTARA [333.108]
Ee	[CP]	VALENCIA DE ALCÁNTARA-LISBOA [9094-038-2610-2]
C	[2]	
L		
R		
S*	[2]	
U		

Depart 2245, arrive 0815 next morning, including stops at Talavera de la Reina, Cáceres, Valencia de Alcántara, Marvão-Beira (Port.), Abrantes, Entroncamento and Lisboa Oriente, on this joint RENFE-CP (Caminhos Ferro Portugueses/Portuguese State Railways) overnight train hauled by a Macosa diesel in Spain and Alstom/Société Matériel et Traction Électrique electric in Portugal **[equipment RENFE unless otherwise indicated]**; * 678 km in 10 hrs 30 mins, or 65 km/h (423 mls/40 mph), taking into account the 1-hour time difference; * Nos. 333.108 (MAC), 9094-038-2610-2 (ALS/MTE) (both 1974); * Sleepers TWL4d/g/u (TAL, 1983-7?, 11dc5qc); **[continued two pages ahead]**



2000's-13: RENFE-CP No. 332 *Lusitânia* just arrived at Lisboa's Santa Apolónia station from Madrid, behind CP electric No. 2610 (2003/10/21) [PETER DAWES].

LUSITÂNIA

Except for a CP electric locomotive within Portugal, our *Lusitânia* "Hotel" train was all-RENFE, including Talgo Pendular Restaurant and Lounge cars and two articulated *Coches Camas* – our *Gran Classe* compartment having a shower. We lucked into an unexpected complimentary breakfast in the Restaurant car, due to a mix-up in calculating the time difference between Spain and Portugal.



[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rail_transport_in_Portugal]



2000's-14: Lisboa trams lined up at their western terminus, Ourique Prazeres, led by our favourite No. 28 L. Camões car, ready to depart for centre city Baixa, then Graça district (2003/10/??) [PETER DAWES].

* We walked from the station to the Baixa district and checked in for two nights at Pensão New Aljubarrota, then spent the day: • ascending the 1902-built Elevador de Santa Justa to get a better view of the city; • exploring the main Praça de Comércio square (buying passes there for the comprehensive Carris de Ferro transit system); • taking the ferry from Cais Sodré across the River Tejo to **Cacilhas** and back, affording an excellent view of the city on the return (a bit reminiscent of approaching San Francisco on the Sausalito ferry); • riding a regional CP commuter train from Cais Sodré station the short distance to Lisboa's Belém district; and • returning to our pension by tram



ELÉTRICOS AND ELEVADORES

Lisboa still boasted a significant tram system (*Eléctricos*), which we used often during our visit. Equipment ranged from the modern, sometimes operating in private right-of-way, to the ancient, which often became seriously bogged down in traffic in the city centre or (in the case of our No. 28 route) could be disrupted by construction in the narrow streets. There were also several funiculars and elevators (both called *Elevadors*) to deal with this hillside city – all honouring our Carris transit passes.

22 OCT:

CP LISBOA ROSSIO-SINTRA & RETURN

Cme [8]

Day excursion to **SINTRA** west of Lisboa, after a morning spent riding more *Eléctricos*, then the Elevador da Bica up the hillside, followed by a bus to the head of the Elevador da Glória, and back down the hill to CP's Estação Rossio; * Depart there at 1435, arrive Sintra 1516, including stops at Benfica (serving the stadium of the famous football club), Barcarena, Cacém and Mercês – passing huge apartment blocks located close to the station in each suburb for easy access into the city; * Sintra was a favourite summer mountain retreat and World Heritage Site, featuring beautiful palaces, castle and parks; * Returning, depart 1725, arrive 1801; * 27 km in 36 mins, or 45 km/h (17 m/s/28 mph), on return trip.

23 OCT:

CP AP135 LISBOA SANTA APOLÓNIA-PORTO CAMPANHÃ

Cme [3]

CfCme

Cme [2]

To **PORTO**, after a busy day of touring by tram and Metro during which we: • visited the Carris public transport museum located at the car barns (including a tram ride between buildings); • took a CP Fergatus line train from Entrecampos suburban station across the Tejo on the spectacular *Ponte 25 de Abril* as far as Pragal (Europe's longest suspension bridge, featuring motor vehicle and railway decks; named after the date of the 1974 coup which signalled the beginning of the end of Portugal's long-standing dictatorship); • enjoyed dessert and coffee at a small cafe back in the Praça district; and • made our way during rush hour to Santa Apolónia station

by the No. 28 tram and a packed transit bus; * Depart there at 1855, arrive Porto Campanhã at 2200, with stops at Lisboa Oriente, Coimbra and Vila Nova de Gaia; * We could have transferred to a regional train to get from Campanhã to the downtown São Bento station, but decided to take a cab, given the late hour and our unfamiliarity with the city; * Hotel da Bolsa in the historic Ribeira became our refuge for two nights – this district having been designated, in its entirety, as a World Heritage Site; * 337 km in 3 hrs 5 mins, or 109 km/h (210 mls/68 mph); * Alfa Pendular (FF/ADT, 1998-2000).

TILT TRAIN

Built at the turn of the decade by Fiat Ferroviaria and ADtranz, CP's Alfa Pendular tilting train set proved to be comfortable and fast over the twisting, conventional line between Lisboa and Porto. The only problem was that smoking was allowed in vestibules and mid-car entrances, meaning that the stuff invaded non-smoking areas when doors were open.

24 OCT:

CP IR861 PORTO SÃO BENTO-RÉGUA

Ed [1416]

C [6]

To **MIRANDELA** via Régua and Tua, walking to São Bento station and departing on an IR (*Inter-Região*) service at 0755, arriving Régua 0955, behind a diesel built by Sorefame in the latter 1960's based on an English design, including stops at Porto Campanhã, Ermesinde, Livração, and Marco de Canaveses – the scenery along the Douro river up into the Trás-os-Montes (Alto Douro) being worth the excursion in itself; * 107 km in 2 hrs, or 54 km/h (67 mls/34 km/h); * No. 1416 (SOR, 1967-9).

CP 4201 RÉGUA-TUA [POCINHO]

Ed [1416]

C [6]

Depart 1006, arrive 1049, including a stop at Pinhão, climbing higher and higher along the Douro past hillside Port wineries, on a local service featuring the same equipment as on the train out of Porto but having a different number; * 37 km in 43 mins, or 51 km/h (23 mls/32 mph).



2000's-15: Two CP *Alfa Pendular* tilt trains wait to depart Lisboa Santa Apolónia station, including our No. AP 135 for Porto (2003/10/23) [PETER DAWES].

CP 6203 TUA-MIRANDELA

Cmd

Depart 1100, arrive 1234 over the *Linha da Tua*, including stops at Brunheda, Abreiro, Vilarinho and Cachão, on a CP narrow-gauge DMU, continuing our climb into the Trás-os-Montes alongside both active and inactive vineyards; * Mirandela itself was a fairly ordinary market town, its medieval Ponte Românica straddling the Tua river; * 54 km in 1 hr 34 mins, or 34 km/h (34 mls/21 mph).

CP 4210 TUA-RÉGUA

Ed [1410]

C [2]

Depart 1601, arrive Régua 1645, after returning to Tua on a CP-chartered bus.



CANADA RULES !

CP offered an afternoon bus from Mirandela back to Tua during this, the low season, meandering up and down the hillsides of the Alto Douro with the radio playing – it being common practice in both Spain and Portugal to have a radio or television as background noise in buses, restaurants and bars. Portuguese-Canadian Nellie Furtado was really big in both countries, as well as other Canucks such as Shania Twain, Sarah McLaughlin, Alannis Morissette, Bryan Adams, even Leonard Cohen – all performing in English.

CP IR864 RÉGUA-PORTO SÃO BENTO

Ed [1415]

C [4]

Depart 1654, arrive 1900, followed by a walk back to our hotel and a meal in a bar featuring extremely salty salmon – perhaps a tradition stemming from the Portuguese love of Newfoundland salt cod over the centuries.

PORTO ELÉTRICOS

We spent a rainy morning riding Porto's two remaining tram lines: • west from Passeio towards the Atlantic Ocean to Line 1E's terminus at Foz do Douro (then being extended farther west again); • back on 1E to the Carro Eléctrico car barn and museum (unfortunately closed to visitors, but a hive of activity as no less than three trams left with private parties); and • Route 18 from Massarelos to Viriato, a short distance from our hotel.

25 OCT:

CP IC522 PORTO CAMPANHÃ-COIMBRA B [LISBOA SANTA APOLÓNIA]

Ee

C [7]

To **BILBAO** in the Basque country of Spain, via Coimbra, Irún and Donostia/San Sebastián, after taking a local train the short distance from São Bento out to Campanhã; * Depart from that station on a CP IC (*Inter Cidade*) service at 1505, arriving Coimbra-B 21 minutes late at 1641, stopping at Vila Nova de Gaia, Espinho,

Aveira and Pampilhosa – Coimbra “B” referring to the mainline station, which was joined by a shuttle rail service to the city centre facility; * 119 km in a scheduled 1 hr 20 mins, or 95 km/h (74 mls/59 mph).

CP 311/RENFE 310 [LISBOA SANTA APOLÓNIA] COIMBRA B-IRÚN [HENDAYE] Sud-Expresso/Surex

Ee LISBOA-VILAR FORMOSO [56??]
 Ed [RENFE] VILAR FORMOSO-HENDAYE
 T [RENFE]
 C [2]
 RL
S*
 C[dd]

Depart 20 minutes late at 1850, arrive on-time at 0659 next morning, including stops at Pampilhosa, Guarda, Vilar Formoso, Salamanca (Sp.), Medina del Campo, Valladolid, Burgos, Miranda de Ebro, Vitoria-Gasteiz and Donostia/San Sebastián, behind a CP Class 5600 electric built by Sorefame and Krauss Maffei in 1993, and an unrecorded RENFE diesel in Spain – this train connecting at Hendaye (just over the border into France) with an SNCF TGV onward to Paris Austerlitz **[equipment CP unless otherwise indicated]**; * We spent the night in the Portuguese *Carruagem-Cama*, a 1957-built “U” type with 11, 3-berth compartments; * Morning found us having continental breakfast in the Restaurant Lounge before disembarking at Irún – reassuring our worried attendant, from the platform, that we indeed had not made off with the magnetic card-lock to our compartment; * 856 km in 11 hrs 9 mins, or 77 km/h (534 mls/48 mph), taking the 1-hour time difference into account; * Class 5600 (SOR/KM, 1993); * U Sleeper (WMD or HW, 1957, 11tc; ex-CIWL).

SUD-EXPRESSO/SUREX

Once one of Europe’s famed *Trains de luxe*, No. 311 *Sud-Expresso* (as it was known in Portugal) and No. 310 *Surex* (in Spain) might have been a mere shadow of its former Wagons-Lits self, but was celebrating its centenary this year – one nice touch being two, small complimentary bottles of Port in our compartment. We enjoyed a lovely meal of salmon in the Restaurant Lounge car, in the company of two Australians travelling around Europe – reassuring them that their RENFE Couchette car attendant indeed would return their Eurailpasses and passports the next morning.



2000's-16: EuskoTren's at Donostia/San Sebastián Amara station, waiting to depart for Bilbao and Hendaia, respectively (2003/10/26) [PETER DAWES].

26 OCT:

RENFE IRÚN-DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN [BRINKOLA]

PCe

C* [2]

Depart 0717, arrive 0740, on a local RENFE train making a number of stops, as we back tracked to Donostia/San Sebastián – the Basque and Spanish names, respectively, for this city; * 17 km in 23 mins, or 45 km/h (11 mls/28 mph).

ET DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN AMARA-BILBAO ATXURI

PCe

C* [2]

PCe

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2003

Depart 0847, arrive 1122 on a narrow-gauge EuskoTrenbideak/Ferrocarriles Vascos (Basque Railways) electric service, including stops at Zarautz, Eibar, Durango and Amorebieta, on a Class 200 set built by CAF in 1985; * We spent the afternoon at the Guggenheim modern art museum, on the west bank of the Nervión river; * 107 km in 2 hrs 35 mins, or 41 km/h (67 mls/25 mph); * Class 200 (CAF, 1985).

EL TOPO

EuskoTren's narrow-gauge Donostia/San Sebastián-Bilbao line was called *El Topo* (The Mole), due its 15 tunnels. Seventeen towns were served in interurban fashion, over a steeply graded, meandering line which was double tracked for only the final 30 of 107 kilometres (19 of 67 miles).

BILBAO STATIONS

After arriving by EuskoTren, we walked in pouring rain from Atxuri station to our Hostal Begoña, located on de la Armistad street near Bilbao's other two terminals, Abando (RENFE) and Concordia (FEVE) – although a kindly lady had tried to inform us that we could use the recently opened tram operated by EuskoTran, almost door-to-door. This newish line also served the world-class, Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim museum.

27 OCT:

FEVE BILBAO CONCORDIA-BALMESEDA & RETURN

Cme [4] [3623]

Quick trip to **BALMESEDA** on a FEVE suburban service, after spending the earlier part of the day: • visiting RENFE's Abando station (taking the escalator up to the second-level concourse and tracks, then looking back at an impressive mural depicting the history of this industrial city); • sampling EuskoTran over its combination of reserved right of way and street-running; • taking a funicular up Monte Artxanda to a park overlooking the city and the river valley; and • enjoying a nice lunch in the Concordia station buffet; * Depart Concordia 1420, arrive Balmededa 1510, including stops at Irauregi, Aranguren and Zalla, on a Class 3600 EMU, interestingly rebuilt in 2001 from an earlier class of DMU's; * Returning, depart 1520, arrive 1610; * 25 km (est.) in 50 mins, or a slow 30 km/h (16 mls/19 mph); * No. 3623 (manufacturer unknown, 1984).



2000's-17: EuskoTran tram passing the Museo Guggenheim, Bilbao, alongside the Nervión river (2003/10/26) [PETER DAWES].

FEVE

Ferrocarriles de Vía Estrecha (Narrow Gauge Railways) out to Balmeseda was somewhat like EuskoTren between Donostia/San Sebastián and Bilbao: multiple stops and heavy use, even during the mid-afternoon. We'd intended to take a FEVE intercity service west to Santander in the Cantabria region, but didn't have the time.

ET BILBAO ATXURI-DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN AMARA

Cme [3]

Back to **LONDON** via Donostia/San Sebastián, Hendaia/Hendaye and Paris, taking the tram from our pension to Atxuri station, then an ET service departing 1800, arriving Donostia/San Sebastián 2039, crowded with people both returning home from Bilbao or travelling between towns – including one drunk who got bounced around severely after he ignored the signs and stood between cars to relieve himself.

ET [LASARTE] DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN AMARA-HENDAIA

Cme [4]

Depart 2045, arrive 2120 at ET's French border station (Hendaia in Spanish), pausing at Irún and several other places, then on foot to the adjacent SNCF facility; * 22 km in 35 mins, or 38 km/h (14 mls/24 mph).

27-28 OCT:

SNCF 4052 HENDAYE-PARIS AUSTERLITZ *La Palombe Bleue*

Ee		[107266]
T	[5]	[TARBES] DAX-PARIS
S		" [61 87 75-71 130-1]
C		"
C		
S		[61 87 75-70 176-5]
T	[5]	

Depart 2233, arrive 0710 on *La Palombe Bleue* (Blue Dove), including stops at St-Jean-de-Luz, Biarritz, Bayonne, Dax, Morcenx and Les Aubrais-Orléans, on a *Service Nuit* having identical Hendaye and Tarbes portions joining at Dax; * Many of the passengers in the Tarbes portion appeared to be from the Far East, most likely pilgrims returning from Lourdes; * 816 km in 8 hrs 37 mins, or 95 km/h (509 mls/59 mph); * No. 107266 (details unavailable).

TWILIGHT OF THE WAGONS-LITS

While we enjoyed a good sleep in our T2 car, its days – and those of most other internal French Sleeping cars – appeared numbered, according to leaflets distributed by the attendant. Partial translation: “The SNCF has decided to discontinue the Wagon-Lits, a unique mode of transport which provides security and tranquility, as well as accompanying personnel. From 15 December [2003], the Tarbes, Irún [Hendaye], and one of three Wagon-Lits in the Train Bleu will disappear (in a year or two, the others could disappear as well). If you like the Wagon-Lits mode of transport, make your concern known to the SNCF. With our thanks, and bon voyage – The Employees of Wagon-Lits.”

DISRUPTION OF SERVICE

Due to a mechanical problem (or perhaps a security alert?), our Line 4 Métro train was terminated three stops short of the Gare du Nord at Réamur-Sébastopol station, after crawling along for a number of stops – forcing everyone to try and board already packed buses on the street above. Fortunately, we had sufficient time to walk the half-dozen blocks to the Gare du Nord and catch our *Eurostar* to London.

28 OCT:

SNCF/ES 9031 PARIS NORD-LONDON WATERLOO INTERNATIONAL *Eurostar*

Ee

C [5]

CfL

C [6]

CfL

C* [5]

Ee

Depart 1304, arrive 1454, with stops at Calais Fréthun and Ashford International (Eng.), after taking Métro Line 5 to the Gare du Nord to put our packs in storage, then spending the morning following a walking tour that took us to Notre Dame Cathedral, Saint-Germain-des-Prés church, and other attractions in this part of the city **[equipment unrecorded but assumed to be owned by SNCF]**; * Waterloo International featured long lineups for British customs and immigration, in contrast to our trip in the other direction when there was no examination by the French; * We took the Bakerloo and Central lines to our previous hotel in Shepherd's Bush, then watched Queens Park Rangers put up a decent fight before losing 3-0 to Premier League side Manchester City in a Football League Cup match; * During the next three days, we pretty much covered the London waterfront, everything from the musical *Anything Goes* at the Theatre Royal (a wonderfully entertaining production with all the great Cole Porter songs), the "Britain" and "Modern" Tate art galleries (the latter located in the old Battersea generating station on the Thames), and HMS BELFAST (a World War II-era battle cruiser berthed permanently in London) – not to mention a curry at Ahmed's in Wimbledon and pints at the 17th century Olde Mitre pub in Holborn (favourite Tom Clark haunts).

MOVING AROUND LONDON

Our three days in London were not exactly train-free. We purchased London Underground passes valid after 0930 for the rest of each day and evening, enabling us to range all over the place from Shepherd's Bush – only our Wimbledon excursion requiring additional fare. The relatively new Jubilee Underground line was a highlight, featuring a much smoother and quieter ride than the older lines, and boasting see-through, “platform-edge doors” synchronized to open directly opposite the car doors when the train stopped.



1 NOV:

**MML 0900/1759 LONDON ST. PANCRAS-STOCKPORT [MANCHESTER PICCADILLY] & RETURN
HST**

Ed

C [6]

Ed

Day excursion to **STOCKPORT**, located on the border between Cheshire and Lancashire just south of Manchester, to watch Queens Park Rangers play Stockport County in a Second Division match, starting with an early Saturday morning trip to St. Pancras on the Central and Victoria lines; * Depart 0900, arrive 1159, including stops at Luton, Wellingborough, Kettering, Market Harborough and Leicester (but none beyond until Stockport), on a packed Midland Mainline HST running through some truly beautiful, rolling countryside – this being the first HST I'd encountered without a Buffet car or first-class Coaches; * After admiring the impressive London & North Western viaduct taking trains onward to Manchester, we stopped for “fish & chippers”, walked to Edgeley Park in time to watch Rangers arrive on their coach, and joined their supporters as the team won another away victory just for us, this time 2-0; * Returning, depart 1759, arrive 2106, on a *really* overcrowded HST, followed by the Victoria and Central lines back to our hotel and one final English pint at the Bushranger; * 310 km in 2 hrs 59 mins, or 104 km/h (193 mls/65 mph), outward direction.

ANOTHER WAY TO MANCHESTER

Under the British “open access” policy, Midland Mainline had extended its hourly London St. Pancras-Leicester service onward via Stoke-on-Trent to Stockport and Manchester, to compensate for unreliable Virgin service on the West Coast Main Line, then being modernized. From our point of view, Midland’s cheap excursion fares were a bonus, considering that our Brit Rail Passes had expired, and seat reservations came at no extra cost. Alas, the railway already had announced that the extended service would be discontinued by year’s end.



[brandsoftheworld.com]

STILL LOTS TO FIX

Stockport station was extremely busy at supertime, with trains arriving and departing every few minutes. Platform assignments typically weren’t announced until minutes before arrival, leading to mad scrambles up and down stairs – and to the general thought that it must be awful being mobility challenged and wanting to use trains in Britain. Once onboard, there was an announcement to the effect that seat reservations could not be honoured, nor cart refreshment service provided. There was a take-out – if you could reach it through the plugged aisles. Most of the many football supporters onboard were happy with the day’s results, these being mainly London-based Manchester United fans. No “hooliganism” – just plenty of happy faces everywhere.

• **2 NOV:** Back home to **EDMONTON** via Vancouver, beginning with a trip on the Hammersmith & City and Piccadilly lines out to Heathrow in the pouring rain, then an uneventful flight on a British Airways 747 (Cunard’s partner in QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 sea/air packages), chasing the setting sun for nine hours and landing in Vancouver just an hour later, local time, than we’d taken off – after which we spent one night at a hotel near the airport; • **3 NOV:** Onward to Edmonton on a WestJet 737, almost six weeks after our holiday had begun.



Receipt No. **44923**

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

ON TRAIN CATERING SERVICE RECEIPT

Date of Travel **5/10/03** Train **1-15** am/pm

[Issued for Elizabethan dinner train, 2003/10/05]



Comboio SUD-EXPRESSO
Lisboa - Hendaye - Lisboa

Estimado Cliente,
Bem vindo a bordo do centenário SUD-EXPRESSO!
Desejando-lhe uma boa e agradável viagem, temos o prazer de lhe oferecer uma bebida!

Estimado Cliente,
Bienvenido a bordo del centenario SUD-EXPRESSO!
Deseándole un feliz y agradable viaje, tenemos el placer de invitarle a una bebida.

[Note accompanying bottles of Port in each sleeper compartment. ("Welcome aboard the centenary SUD-EXPRESSO! We wish you a good and pleasant journey. It is with great pleasure that we offer you a welcoming drink.")]

2007

*ENGLAND/CZECH REPUBLIC
SLOVAKIA/HUNGARY/IT-
ALY/FRANCE/GERMANY
BELGIUM/AUSTRIA*



[Eurail, Railway Map, 2007]

SYNOPSIS

This was my thirteenth overseas holiday (eighth with Sandra), featuring two weeks in England, three on the Continent (primarily Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Italy), and most of a week coming home on Cunard's QUEEN MARY 2. Our primary home bases were at: the Brook Green Hotel in Hammersmith, west London; Margaret Dyke & Eva Young's place in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire; and Richard & Sylvia Beardshaw's country home near Chaddesley Corbett, Worcestershire. The Eurail logo on the opening page reflects our use of the venerable pass, now encompassing 18 countries.

Trips taken: We took 91 covering 10,097 kilometres (6,302 miles), 42 in the British Isles, 15 in Slovakia, 13 in Hungary, 10 in Czech Republic, 6 in Italy, 2 in France, and 1 each in Austria, Belgium and Germany. Eighty-six of the trips were in my "Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges" category and 5 in "Sleeping & Couchette Cars", the latter accounting for 38% of the total distance. Forty-five were on locomotive hauled, compared to 46 on self-propelled, trains, the latter covering only 22% of that distance. There were 6 trips behind steam, all in England.

Equipment units: 550, made up of 69 Locomotives & Related Units and 481 cars (Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges, 420; Sleeping & Couchette Cars, 37; Restaurant & Other Meal Cars, 23; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 1).

BRITISH ISLES

Places visited in England: Ashford (Mid.), Bedale*, Birmingham, Blakedown, Chaddesley Corbett*, Cleethorpes, Coalbrookdale*, Doncaster, Dudley*, East Grinstead*, Gatwick, Grimsby, Haywards Heath, Horsted Keynes, Ironbridge*, Kingscote, Kingswear, Leicester, Leyburn*, Lincoln, London, Manchester, Newton Abbot, Northallerton, Oxted, Paignton, Penzance, Plymouth, Preston, Reading, St. Austell, St. Erth, St. Ives, Scunthorpe, Sheffield Park, Southampton, Staines, Tipton*, Torquay*, Wolverhampton and York. (**Note:** * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: **GNER 1700**, London King's Cross to Doncaster; **Midand Metro 1535**,

Wolverhampton St. George's to Birmingham Snow Hill; **FGW 0927**, Worcester Shrub Hill to London Paddington; **Bluebell 1342**, Horsted Keynes to Sheffield Park; **FGW Night Riviera**, London Paddington to Plymouth; **Paignton & Dartmouth 1030**, Paignton Queen's Park to Kingswear; **VT 1403**, Newton Abbot to Preston.

Fastest average speed: GNER 1700, London King's Cross to Doncaster: 165 km/h (103 mph).

Slowest: P&D 1030/1115, Paignton Queen's Park to Kingswear & return: 22 km/h (14 mph).

Memorable non-rail trips: QUEEN MARY 2 from Southampton to New York; Automobile from Chaddesley Corbett to Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge, Shropshire.

THE CONTINENT

Places visited in Austria: Wien. **Belgium:** Bruxelles/Brussel. **Czech Republic:** Bečov nad Teplou, Bruno, České Budějovice, Český Krumlov, Karlovy Vary, Karlštejn, Mariánské Lázně, Plzeň and Praha. **France:** Paris. **Germany:** Köln. **Hungary:** Budapest, Eger, Füzesabony, Slajkovölgy, Szalajka, Szilvásvár and Zebegény. **Italy:** Firenze, Padova, Pisa and Venezia. **Slovakia:** Košice, Poprad Tatry, Starý Smokovec, Štrba, Štrbské Pleso and Tatranská Lomnica. (**Note:** * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: **ES/SNCF/SNCB 9138**, London Waterloo International to Bruxelles Midi/Brussel Zuid; **SNCB/DB 9453**, Bruxelles Midi/Brussel Zuid to Köln; **DB/ČD Kopernikus**, Köln to Praha Hlavní; **ČD Johann Gregor Mendel**, Praha Holešovice to Brno; **ČD-ŽSSK Excelsior**, Karlovy Vary Horní to Poprad Tatry; **TEŽ 8120**, Starý Smokovec to Štrbské Pleso; **ŽSSK/MÁV Rákóczi**, Košice to Füzesabony; **MÁV**, Húvösvölgy to Széchenyi-hegy; **ÖBB/TI Allegro Don Giovanni**, Wien West to Venezia Santa Lucia; **TI 9465**, Padova to Firenze Santa Maria Novella; **TI/SNCF Palatino**, Firenze Campo di Marte to Paris Bercy.

Fastest average speed: SNCF/ES 9031, Paris Nord to London Waterloo International: 169 km/h (105 mph). **Slowest: ÁEV**, Slajkovölgy Lovespálya to Szalajka Fatyolvízésés: 9 km/h (6 mph).

Memorable non-rail trips: none.

HIGHLIGHTS!

Speeding through Flanders on *Eurostar* to Bruxelles/Brussel, enjoying an evening meal on *Thalys* to Köln, and occupying a modern Czech Sleeping car in *Kopernikus* to Praha, complete with an ample continental breakfast – demonstrating the convenience of the Chunnel and *Eurostar* for trips deep into the Continent. Then there was sailing on *QUEEN MARY 2* from Southampton to New York, a transatlantic liner despite the “balconies”, and a credit to Cunard.

MILESTONE

Wagons-Lits’ role in manning and provisioning Sleeping cars on the Continent continued to decline. Although still handling the Wien-Venezia *Allegro Don Giovanni*, it had lost the contract for the Roma-Paris *Palatino* (a traditional CIWL run) to another company, Voyages Wasteels.

		REZERVACE RESERVIERUNG gewöhnlicher Zug		02 MÍSTA/PLÄTZE		
CIV 54						
		Z/DE/VON	DO/A/NACH			TR./CL./KL.
30.09	19:12	KARLOVY VARY	->POPRAD-TATRY	01.10	08:32	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
VLAK 421		VÖZ 877		LÖŽKO/BETTPLATZ 31 35		
ZUG		WAGEN				
02 DOUBLE						
				CZK	*****855,00	
				EUR	*****30,00	
541692584731		české dráhy, a.s.		HOTOVĚ/BARZAHLUNG		
00005309401 WASTEELS PRAHA		Osvob. od DPH 870				
*0033-794 2690		59526 24.09.07 10:21				

[Sleeping car ticket in Czech and German, from Karlovy Vary (Czech Republic) to Poprad Tatry (Slovakia), issued by Voyages Wasteels at Praha’s Hlavní nádraží]



[thalys.com]

TRIPS AND TRAIN COMPOSITION

- **19-20 SEP:** To **LONDON** Gatwick overnight non-stop, on an Airbus 310 operated by Montréal-based Air Transat, Canada's largest charter airline, offering limited legroom but right at the price.

20 SEP:

SR 1108 [PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR] GATWICK AIRPORT-LONDON VICTORIA

Cme [4] [377 157]

Cme [4] [BOGNOR REGIS] BARNHAM-LONDON

Into **LONDON** on a Southern Railway third-rail, Electric Multiple Unit (EMU), Class 377 Electrostar built by Bombardier earlier in the decade (this service originating in both Portsmouth and Bognor Regis), departing 1108 and arriving 1147, with stops at Redhill and the major transfer points of East Croydon and Clapham Jct.; * We chose a normal Southern train instead of the more expensive, but slightly faster, *Gatwick Airport Express*; * Onward to Paddington station on London Underground's Circle line to enquire about future reservations, then by Hammersmith & City line to the Brook Green Hotel in Shepherd's Bush Road, our base for the next three nights; * 44 km in 39 mins, or 68 km/h (27 mls/42 mph); * No. 377 157 (BBD, 2002-3).

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

... was the successor to Connex South Central, with services based on London Bridge and Victoria stations. It was operated by Govia, also holder of the current Southeastern (ex-Connex South Eastern) franchise.

21 SEP:

SWT 1558/2211 LONDON WATERLOO-ASHFORD [WINDSOR ETON & RIVERSIDE] & RETURN

Cme [8/4] [450 101 rear/450 095]

To **ASHFORD**, Middlesex, to visit cousin Kitty and family, who had agreed to store our "Ship Bag" (containing finery needed on QUEEN MARY 2 at the end of our holiday); * Depart 1558, arrive 1633, on a South West Trains Class 450 Blue Desiro EMU train built by Siemens, including stops at Vauxhaul, Clapham Jct., Richmond and Twickenham, accessing Waterloo from Shepherd's Bush by Central and Northern lines (stopping off at Leicester Square to purchase theatre tickets); * Returning, depart 2211, arrive Waterloo

2248, then Bakerloo and Central lines; * 28 km in 35 mins, or 48 km/h (17 mls/30 mph); *Class 450 (SMT, 2003-4); * Next day found us flitting around London on transit day passes: • Central and Northern lines to Embankment to visit the Tate Modern art gallery and Globe Shakespearean theatre; • back to Shepherd's Bush on Bakerloo and Central lines to watch Queens Park Rangers settle for a 1-1 draw at Loftus Road stadium against league leading Watford Town; and • into the West End on the same lines to see *Mamma Mia* (a loose plot stringing together ABBA's hits of the 1970's – great fun).

23 SEP:

ES/SNCF/SNCB 9138 LONDON WATERLOO INTERNATIONAL-BRUXELLES MIDI/BRUSSEL ZUID Eurostar

Ee [3218]
 C* [5]
 CfL
 C [6]
 CfL
 C [5]
 Ee [3217]

To **PRAHA**, Czech Republic, via Bruxelles/Brussel and Köln, accessing Waterloo by Central and Bakerloo lines – our third *Eurostar* trip but first on the Brussels route, involving Eurostar UK (ES), French National (SNCF), and Belgian National (SNCB); * Depart 1413, arrive nine minutes late at 1745, racing through the Chunnel and stopping only at Lille (Fr.) Europe station [**equipment owned by SNCF**]; * Passengers brought a huge amount of luggage onboard, most of which sat unrestrained on the overhead racks – a real safety hazard in the event of a derailment, especially at those speeds; * 376 km in a scheduled 2 hrs 23 mins, or 158 km/h (235 mls/99 mph), taking into account the 1-hour time difference; * Nos. 3217, 3218 (GECAL, 1993, SNCF).

LAST DAYS FOR WATERLOO INTERNATIONAL

Eurostar (UK) was scheduled to move its London terminal to a rebuilt St. Pancras station, effective 14 NOV. Included on the new stretch would be an international station called Ebbsfleet on the south side of the Thames in Kent, and later another on the north side at Stratford, close to the new park under construction for the 2012 Olympic Games.

SNCB/DB 9453 [PARIS NORD] BRUXELLES MIDI/BRUSSEL ZUID-KÖLN Thalys

Ee [4345]

C [4]

CfL

C* [3]

Ee

Depart 27 minutes late at 1949 (after a friendly SNCB agent had validated both our Eurail and Czech passes), arrive only 10 minutes behind schedule at 2155, on a Paris-originating, high-speed Thalys TGV operating over ordinary track, stopping at Liège and Aachen (Ger.) **[equipment assumed to be owned by SNCB]**; * 230 km in 2 hrs 6 mins, or 110 km/h (144 mls/69 mph); * No. 4345 (GECAL, 1996, SNCB or SNCF).

THALYS HIGH-SPEED TRAINS

Thalys was the marketing name for 8-car, 2-locomotive, "PBKA" TGV's operating between Paris, Bruxelles/Brussel, Köln and Amsterdam (thus, "PBKA"), like Eurostar, built by GEC-Alstom. Our Köln train consisted of Set No. 4325, one of 17 equipped to operate between the four cities, 9 owned by SNCB, 6 by SNCF, and 2 by NS (Nederlandse Spoorwegen/Netherlands State Railway). This set had been in a grade-crossing accident in the Netherlands back in 1998 while in Amsterdam-Paris service, fortunately with a handful of minor injuries. On-board announcements were in French, Flemish, German and English, and our first-class Eurailpasses entitled us to a decent, airline style meal.

23-24 SEP:

DB NZ1449/D60379/D379-ČD 379 [HAGEN] KÖLN-PRAHA HLAVNÍ Kopernikus

Ee HAGEN-DĚČÍN? [101 132-9]

Ee [ČD] DĚČÍN-PRAHA [E162020-2]

C HAGEN-HANNOVER [KØBENHAVN]

T [2] "

S "

C [2] HAGEN-BERLIN [OSTSEEBAD/BINZ]

T "

S "

R		HAGEN-BERLIN
C	[3]	BERLIN-PRAHA
C	[2]	
T		
S	[JLV]	[61 54 72-91 001-2]

Depart 2224, arrive 10 minutes late at 0959 next morning at Hlavní nádraží (main station), including stops at Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, Bochum, Dortmund, Hamm, Berlin, Dresden, Bad Schandau, Děčín (CR), Ústí nad Labem, and Praha Holešovice **[equipment DB unless indicated otherwise]**; * Electric locomotives included a DB Class 101 (one of 145 built by ADtranz to replace aging Class 103's) and a České Dráhy Škoda Class 162; * Deutsche Bundesbahn had been split into several companies back in 1994, the passenger version named Deutsche Bahn AG, and by 2007, DBAG (as it was sometimes called) was still 100% government-owned, while Sleeping and meal cars were the responsibility of subsidiary Reise und Touristik AG; * We enjoyed a substantial continental breakfast south of Dresden while speeding alongside the Elbe river – the entire ride approaching the Czech Republic, and into Praha following the Vltava river, showing why it made Cook's list of scenic European railways; * A Růžová street apartment became home for three nights, located not a five minute walk from the main station (arranged, as was all our accommodation, in advance over the Internet, based on the Lonely Planet guide) – owner "Lubo" having tried and failed, at his own volition, to meet us at both Holešovice and Hlavní stations; * Next came the old town square, Charles bridge and Vltava, before taking Tram 22 from Malostranské up into the hills to Bílá Hora (White Mountain), followed upon our return by more walking around the city centre and a ride on Metro Line C from I.P. Pavlova to Hlavní nádraží – and finally, a genuine Czech meal at neighbourhood Restaurace Bredovský dvůr; * 989 km in a scheduled 11 hrs 25 mins, or 87 km/h (617 mls/54 mph); * No. 101 132-9 (ADT, 1996-9), recorded at Köln (possibly replaced at Berlin or elsewhere); * No. E162020-2 (ŠKD, 1991); * No. 61 54 72-91 001-2 (details unavailable); * Assumptions include position of Restaurant, and diversion point for København cars; **[continued on next page]**

KOPERNIKUS

... was styled a *NachtZug* in Germany (meaning Night Train) and contained portions for København and the Baltic resort of Ostseebad/Binz. We'd reserved a shower-equipped compartment in the Praha-bound Czech Sleeping car, possibly an "MUn" type operated by České Dráhy (CD) subsidiary, Jídelní a Lůžkové Vozy (Dining & Sleeping Car Co. – JLV). As for ČD, it was formed in 1993 after the breakup of Czechoslovakia.



2000's-18: Köln Hbf train board for DB NachtZug No. 1449 *Kopernikus*, featuring portions for København, Ostseebad/Binz, and Praha, showing where each portion would stop at the platform (2007/09/23) [SANDRA DAWES].

* Next day, we purchased an excellent map of Praha featuring transit routes (interestingly, published by International Travel Maps of Vancouver), then traced the homes and work places of Czech author, Franz Kafka, before taking a No. 16 tram south along the Vltava to Braník ČD station, and finally back to St. Nicolas church for a concert featuring Dvořák, Bach, Handel and Mendelssohn – this being one of the few days during our holiday featuring a steady rain.

VOYAGES WASTEELS

... was a Belgian transportation and tourism company having an office in Praha's Hlavní nádraží, enabling us to reserve a sleeping compartment for a future Karlovy Vary-Poprad Tatry trip (not bookable at home through RailEurope). Wasteels also sold us rail tickets for the Slovak portion, not to mention 72-hour transit passes for Praha.

26 SEP:

ČD 9924/9933 PRAHA HLAVNÍ-KARLŠTEJN [BEROUN] & RETURN

Cme [6/3] [451 092-1 front/471 022-4]

To **KARLŠTEJN**, southwest of Praha, for the day, departing 1026, arriving 1108, stops including Dobřichovice, Revnice and Zadní Třebaň, on a suburban EMU train built in the 1960's by Vagonka Tatra Studénka – the purpose being to visit the local castle, built high above the scenic Berounka river in the 14th century by Emperor Charles IV; * Returning, depart 1357, arrive 1443, on a newish suburban EMU set branded *CityElefant*, built by ČKD Vagonka-Škoda; * Then by Metro Line C from Hlavní nádraží to I.P. Pavlova and Tram 6 across the Vltava to Petřínské sady (Petřín Hill), walking up the Eiffel-like tower for great views of the city before returning to street level on a funicular; * 33 km in 42 mins, or 47 km/h (21 mls/29 mph), outbound; * Nos. 451 092-1 (VTS, 1964-8), 471 022-4 (ČKD, 2006-7).

27 SEP:

ČD SC73 PRAHA HOLEŠOVICE-BRNO [WIEN SÜD] Johann Gregor Mendel

PCe
C
CfL
C* [3]
PCe [682 003-9]

To **ČESKÝ KRUMLOV** in southern Bohemia, round about via Brno and České Budějovice mainly to see the countryside, starting with a Metro trip on Line C under the Vltava to Holešovice station; * Depart 0826, arrive Brno 1049, with just the one stop at Pardubice – Brno being the capital of the province of Moravia, which takes in the eastern third of Czech Republic; * 255 km in 2 hrs 23 mins, or 107 km/h (159 mls/66 mph), distance from Hlavní nádraží; * No. 682 003-9 (ALSF, 2004).

JOHANN GREGOR MENDEL

Named after the 19th century Austrian geneticist, ČD No. SC 73 was a *SuperCity Pendolino* tilt train joining the old Hapsburg cities of Wien and Praha. Built by Alstom-Ferrovial and designed to wring maximum speed out of conventional track, it proved to be smooth riding and comfortable, if not terribly fast at 107 kilometres (66 miles) per hour.



2000's-19: ČD No. 9924 waits to depart Praha's Hlavní nádraží for Karlštejn and Beroun, made up of two EMU sets led by 451 902-1, alongside a conventional intercity train to the left (2007/09/25) [PETER DAWES].

ČD 664 BRNO-ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE [PLZEŇ]

Ed	BRNO-JIHLAVA [754 043-8]
Ee	JIHLAVA-PLZEŇ
C	[5]

Depart 1125 in heavy rain, arrive 12 minutes late at 1600 on a slow, multi-stop train passing through farm and woodland, pausing at places such as Trěbič, Okříšky and Kostelice – our ČKD-built diesel locomotive being replaced by an electric at Jihlava; * České Budějovice was the medieval capital of southern Bohemia and home of the famous Budweiser Budvar lager beer; * 236 km in a scheduled 4 hrs 23 mins, or 54 km/h (147 mls/34 mph); * No. 754 043-8 (ČKD, 1979-80).

ČD 8111 ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE-ČESKÝ KRUMLOV [KÁJOF]

PCd	[012 257-2]
C	[810 662-1]

Depart 1720, arrive 1820 (seven minutes late throughout), on a 2-car, Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) train whose trailer Coach was built by Vagonka Tatra Studénka in 1982, slowly making its way through places such as Vrbábče, Plešovice and Domoradice – followed by a walk down into the town and the funky Pension Lobo, Latrán street, our home for three nights; * 31 km in 1 hr, or 31 km/h (19 mls/19 mph); * Nos. 810 662-1 (VTS, 1982), 012 257-2 (details unavailable); * We spent the following two days exploring this beautiful UNESCO Heritage Site town nearby the Austrian border, with the Vltava river meandering through and a fascinating 14th century castle on the hillside – overall, a must-see for anyone exploring central/eastern Europe; * As a bonus, Saint Wenceslaus celebrations were underway, including an international folklore festival starring performers from Bohemia, Moravia and Poland beyond – Wenceslaus I being the Czech patron saint.

30 SEP:

ČD 8102 [VOLARY] ČESKÝ KRUMLOV-ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE

PCd

C*

To **TATRANSKÁ LOMNICA** in the High Tatra mountains of eastern Slovakia, via České Budějovice, Plzeň, Mariánské Lázně, Bečov nad Teplou, Karlovy Vary, Praha, Poprad Tatry, and Starý Smokovec; * Depart 0806, arrive Č. Budějovice 0859.

ČD 360 [WIEN FRANZ JOSEPHS] ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE-PLZEŇ

Ee GMÜND-PLZEŇ [242 258-2]

C* ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE-PLZEŇ

C [4]

Depart 1002, arrive 1158 on a train originating at Wien's "third" station, Franz Josephs Bahnhof, behind a venerable Class 252 electric built by Škoda, stops including Protivín, Strakonice and Nepomuk; * We occupied a first-class Coach added at České Budějovice, like most standard Czech Coaches, acceptably clean but sporting antiquated washrooms; * Plzeň was the capital of western Bohemia and home to that great Czech export, Pilsner Urquell lager (in Czech, *Plzeňský pradoz*, meaning "Original source of fountainhead"; * 136 km in 1 hr 56 mins, or 70 km/h (85 mls/43 mph); * No. 242 258-2 (ŠKD, 1975-81).

ČD 752 [PRAHA HLAVNÍ] PLZEŇ-MARIÁNSKÉ LÁZNĚ [FRANTIŠKOVY LÁZNĚ]

Ee

C [8]

Depart 1204, arrive 1315 on a Praha-originating train, including stops at Sřibo and Planá, at low speed due to what appeared to be the laying of a third track on this important route to the German border at Cheb; * Mariánské Lázně was one of several spa towns in the Carlsbad region of Bohemia, known in German as Marienbad; * 76 km in 1 hr 11 mins, or 64 km/h (47 mls/40 mph).

ČD 7159 [ZWICKAU] MARIÁNSKÉ LÁZNĚ-BEČOV NAD TEPLOU

Cmd [VTB] [VT 31]

Depart 1429, arrive 1517, including stops at Teplá and Poutnov, on a Siemens-Duewag RegioSprinter diesel railcar owned by the German Vogtlandbahn, an Arriva company operating a regional network in Saxony, Thuringia and Bavaria, some of whose services extended into the Czech Republic in cooperation with ČD; * Very much a low-speed, interurban-style operation, our railcar terminated at Bečov due to track work ahead, passengers taking a chartered bus the final 33 kilometres (21 miles) into Karlovy Vary Doiní station; * Known as Karlsbad in German and Carlsbad in English (and located at the confluence of the Ohře and Teplá rivers), this famous resort featured impressive spas and hotels now catering to the *nouveau riche* (including Russians), in place of the old rich and royalty back in the 19th century – not a particularly appealing place, unless one wished to “take the waters”; * 20 km in 48 mins, or 25 km/h (12 mls/16 mph); * VT 31 (SDW, 1995-9, VTB).

30 SEP-1 OCT:

ČD/ŽSSK 421 [CHEB] KARLOVY VARY HORNÍ-POPRAD TATRY [KOŠICE] *Excelsior*

Ee		CHEB-PRAHA [242 208-7]
Ee		PRAHA-ČADCA
Ee	[ŽSSK]	ČADCA-KOŠICE
S	[ŽSSK]	CHEB-PRAHA [BANSKÁ BYSTRKA]
R		CHEB-PRAHA
S		[DRESDEN] PRAHA-KOŠICE
S	[2]	[PLZEŇ] PRAHA-KOŠICE
C	[2]	[FRANTIŠKOVY LÁZNĚ] PRAHA-KOŠICE
C*	[4]	
T	[ŽSSK]	
S	[ŽSSK]	
S	[ŽSSK]	CHEB-PRAHA
S		PRAHA-KOŠICE [51 54 70 80 217-1]

S [RZD] CHEB-PRAHA [MOSKVA]

Depart Horní (upper) station at 1912, arrive 0835 next morning, stops including Chomutov, Most, Teplice v Čechách, Ústí nad Labem, Praha (Holešovice and Hlavní), Kolin, Pardubice, Olomouc, Přerov, Ostrava, Bohumin, Čadca, Žilina (Slov.), and Štrba **[equipment ČD unless indicated otherwise]**; * Like Praha's Hlavní nádraží (indeed most Czech stations we encountered), this one was chaotic and dungy – quite in need of refurbishment; * In recent years, Slovak Railways had been split into infrastructure, cargo and passenger companies, the last-mentioned now called Železničná Spoločnosť Slovensko (ŽSSK); * Poprad was a small industrial city and transportation centre for the Tatra mountains, with a modernized train station; * 843 km in 13 hrs 23 mins, or 63 km/h (526 mls/39 mph), including a scheduled 1 hr 25 mins in Praha Hlavní; * Train reversed direction somewhere between Karlovy Vary and Praha, also between Praha and Poprad Tatry; * AB33 Sleeper No. 51 54 70 80 217-1 (manufacturer unknown, 1955-65, 10tc).

EXCELSIOR

... was a workhorse, overnight service running from one end of the old Czechoslovakia to the other, as well as providing a Russian Sleeping car from Cheb and Karlovy Vary to Moskva. Due to an electrical or mechanical problem, our Košice-bound ŽSSK Sleeper arrived at Karlovy Vary with the lights out and no attendant in sight, meaning that we had to settle for Coach seats (albeit first-class) as far as Praha where a replacement ČD Sleeper was attached at Hlavní nádraží – but not until midnight, an hour and a half after we'd arrived. Also waiting to board this car was a party of a dozen or so English blokes who were heading to the High Tatras for some hiking. Certain of the Slovak cars were branded *Wagon Slovakia*, which provided meal, Sleeping and Couchette cars on ŽSSK.

FROM PRAHA HLAVNÍ NÁDRAŽÍ TRAIN CONSIST BOARDS

Right across the platform from our *Excelsior* was ČD No. 209 *Vlatava*, a Praha-Moskva train normally including five, adjustable gauge, RZD Sleeping cars to Moskva, one to Sankt Peterburg, and one to Minsk (Belarus). No. 423 *Cassovia* was scheduled to depart earlier at 2002 for Košice, normally carrying a Couchette car, two Sleepers (one originating in České Budějovice), and an automobile transporter. Other trains of interest included: • No. 201 *Silesia*, with two Sleepers to Kraków, one to Warszawa, and one to Kyiv; and • No. 375 *Pannonia*, featuring Sleepers to Banská Bystrica (originating in Cheb on *Excelsior*), Budapest and București.

1 OCT:**TEŽ 8112 POPRAD TATRY-STARÝ SMOKOVEC [ŠTRBSKÉ PLESO]**

Cme [2] [425.960-2,425.953-7]

Depart 1015, arrive 1039 on the Tatra Electric Railway, including stops at Vel'ký Slavkov and Nová Lesná, on a modern, 2-car EMU built by ADtranz-Stadler – this and the other segments involving substantial gradients; * 13 km in 24 mins, or 33 km/h (8 mls/21 mph); * Class 425 (ADS, 2000).

TEŽ 8210 STARÝ SMOKOVEC-TATRANSKÁ LOMNICA

Cme [425.954-1]

Depart 1042, arrive 1056, including stops at Horný Smokovec and Tatranská Lesná; * We booked into the Grand Hotel Praha, built in 1906 on the mountainside by the Wagons-Lits Co. as part of its extensive system of hotels accessed by famous *Trains de luxe* and connections – taking advantage of its beautiful grand staircase and lounge, French-style restaurant, and “American bar”, all at a modest, off-season rate; * The Tatras were part of the Carpathian mountain range, quite spectacular in that they seemed to appear out of nowhere, vaguely like our Canadian Rockies; * 6 km in 14 mins, or 26 km/h (4 mls/16 mph).

TATRA RAILWAYS

There were four lines in this area, all the responsibility of ŽSSK. **Tatranská Elektrická Železničná** (TEŽ) was built between 1908 and 1912 and comprised two narrow-gauge, passenger-only lines: Poprad Tatry (on the Bratislava-Košice main line) to Starý Smokovec and Štrbské Pleso, 22 kilometres (14 miles); and S. Smokovec to Tatranská Lomnica, 6 km (4 mls). A 3-day TEŽ pass cost 20 koruna (approximately \$8 Cdn.) **Ozubnicovej Železnice** (OŽ) was a narrow-gauge cog railway built in 1886 between Štrbské Pleso and Štrba on the main line: 5 km (3 mls). **ŽSSK** itself operated diesel railcars between the main line at Studený Potok and Tatranská Lomnica (9 km [6 mls]), some trains originating or terminating at Poprad Tatry. Additionally, there was cable car operator Tatranské Lanové Dráhy (TLD), serving the mountains.



[Tatranská Elektrická Železničná logo (tldtatry.sk)]



2000's-20: Tatra Electric Railway No. 8210 ready to depart Starý Smokovec for Tatranská Lomnica, comprised of single Electric Multiple Unit 425.954-1 (2007/10/01) [PETER DAWES].

TEŽ 8217 TATRANSKÁ LOMNICA-STARÝ SMOKOVEC

Cme [2]

To **ŠTRBSKÉ PLESO** for the afternoon, departing 1330, arriving Starý Smokovec 1343; * In addition to being the junction for TEŽ's two lines, this town boasted a funicular up to Hrebienok, a jump-off point for sightseeing and hiking; * Most of the Tatra resorts were yet to recover from a massive 2004 wind storm which devastated the mountain-side forests.

TEŽ 8120/8129 [POPRAD TATRY] STARÝ SMOKOVEC-ŠTRBSKÉ PLESO & RETURN

Cme [2]

Depart 1410, arrive 1448, including stops at Sibír, Tatranské Zruby and Nová Polianka; * This modern ski resort featured a beautiful glacial lake reminiscent of those located in our Rocky Mountain national parks, and thankfully had been spared the wind storm; * Returning, depart 1758, arrive 1837; * 16 km in 38 mins, or 25 km/h

(10 mls/16 mph).

TEŽ 8224 STARÝ SMOKOVEC-TATRANSKÁ LOMNICA

Cme [2]

Depart 1843, arrive 1856.

2 OCT:

TEŽ 8219 TATRANSKÁ LOMNICA-STARÝ SMOKOVEC

Cme

To **ŠTRBA**, via Starý Smokovec and Štrbské Pleso; * Depart 1439, arrive S. Smokovec 1452, after spending the morning taking the TLD cable car up to Skalnaté Pleso, elevation 1,750 metres (3,850 feet), site of a glacial lake, observatory and chair lift taking sightseers (skiers in season) farther up the mountain – the cable car paralleling an older one whose disused terminus stood right next to our hotel; * There was a further cable car from Skalnaté Pleso right up to Lomnický štít (peak), elev. 2,630 m (5,800 ft), but it was out of service that week – too bad, as it looked spectacular on this bright, sunny day, and right at the top was a cafe featuring overnight accommodation.

TEŽ 8122 [POPRAD TATRY] STARÝ SMOKOVEC-ŠTRBSKÉ PLESO

Cme [2]

Depart 1459, arrive 1537.

OŽ 8023/8022 ŠTRBSKÉ PLESO-ŠTRBA & RETURN

Cme [2] [405.952-3]

Depart 1640, arrive 1657 on the cog railway, stopping only at Tatranský Lieskovec; * Modernized in 1970, this line ran down to the ŽSSK main-line station at Štrba, utilizing Swiss equipment built in the late 1960's; * Returning, depart 1708, arrive 1725; * 5 km in 17 mins, or 18 km/h (3 mls/11 mph); * No. 405.952-3 (SLM/BBC, 1968).

TEŽ 8129 ŠTRBSKÉ PLESO-STARÝ SMOKOVEC [POPRAD TATRY]

Cme

Depart 1758, arrive 1837.

TEŽ 8224 STARÝ SMOKOVEC-TATRANSKÁ LOMNICA

Cme

Depart 1843, arrive 1856.

3 OCT:

TEŽ 8215 TATRANSKÁ LOMNICA-STARÝ SMOKOVEC

Cme

To **EGER** in northeastern Hungary, via Starý Smokovec, Poprad Tatry, Košice and Füzesabony; * Depart 1231, arrive Starý Smokovec 1244.

TEŽ 8117 [ŠTRBSKÉ PLESO] STARÝ SMOKOVEC-POPRAD TATRY

Cme [2]

Depart 1250, arrive 1315, this being our final journey on the interesting Tatra Electric.

ŽSSK IC405 [WIEN WEST] POPRAD TATRY-KOŠICE *Tatran*

Ee [350 006]

C*

R

C [5]

Depart 1424, arrive 1529, behind a 1976-built Škoda electric stopping only at Kysak, this train featuring a Restaurant car staffed by Wagon Slovakia and marked "Bistro Bar"; * Slovakia's largest city after Bratislava, Košice featured a busy train station with trams and buses circulating in the forecourt – a place meriting more time than we gave it, considering its musical fountain, 14th century gothic cathedral, and medieval archaeological excavations; * Interestingly, the US Steel company had purchased the huge steelworks in Košice and was a important customer of Slovak Railways' CARGO division, its logo prominent on passing freight cars; * 101 km in 1 hr 5 mins, or 94 km/h (63 mls/58 mph); * No. 350 006 (ŠKD, 1976).



[wgske.sk]

TICKETING ARRANGEMENTS TO HUNGARY

Knowing that our Eurailpasses would kick in upon arrival in Hungary, we visited the ŽSSK ticket office in Poprad Tatry station and purchased 1st class rail tickets right to the border at Hidasnémeti, as well as supplements for IC 405 *Tatran* to Košice – such trains requiring these supplements in Slovakia.

ŽSSK 413/MÁV 531 KOŠICE-FÜZESABONY [BUDAPEST KELETI] *Rákóczi*

Ee	[MÁV]	HIDASNÉMETI-BUDAPEST [V43 13??]
Ee		KOŠICE-HIDASNÉMETI [363 101-7]
C*	[7]	
C	[4] [MÁV]	HIDASNÉMETI-BUDAPEST

Scheduled to depart 1805 and arrive 2014, but actually left at 1943 and got in at 2156, including stops at Hidasnémeti (Hung.), Miskolc and Mezőkövesd, behind ŽSSK Škoda Class 363, then MÁV Ganz-MÁVAG Class V43, electric locomotives **[equipment ŽSSK unless indicated otherwise]**; * This Budapest-destined train bore the name of a noble family which once ruled this central part of Europe and (especially Ferenc II Rákóczi) led uprisings against the Hapsburg monarchy; * MÁV now functioned in two divisions, CARGO for freight and START for passenger, with many cars of the latter bearing the “H-START” imprint (the “H” perhaps for Hungaria); * 144 km in 2 hrs 13 mins, or 65 km/h (90 mls/40 mph); * Nos. 363 101-7 (ŠKD, 1988), V43 13?? (GVG, 1964-85; Ir-431 3??).

HOLD THAT VLAK!

ŽSSK held Train (*Vlak*) No. 413 *Rákóczi* in Košice station for 1 hour and 38 minutes, due to two late arriving connections, probably EC121 from Praha (scheduled in at 1623) and local No. 607 from Bratislava (arrive 1752). These stormed in on either side of us just before we finally got underway at 1943. The language barrier made it difficult to communicate with train staff, but apparently there had been a blockage of the main line west of Košice. Amusingly, there was a bar on our platform, frequented mainly by what looked to be off-duty railway workers, some of whom rushed on board our Coach from time to time to use the facilities.

HELPFUL MÁV TRAIN GUY

Sitting in *Rákóczi* as it barrelled along trying to make up time through the Hungarian countryside was a bit stressful, partly because getting one's bearings was difficult in the evening darkness. I used sign language (and the Cook's) to ask the MÁV conductor when we'd be arriving at our transfer point of Fűzesabony, and he used his electronic, hand-held device to assured us that we would make our connection.

MÁV 5548 FÜZESABONY-EGER

PCd [Bzmot ???]

C*

PCd [Bzmot ???]

Depart 2209, arrive 2224, with one stop at Maklár, on a 3-car diesel train built by Vagonka Tatra Studénka, despite this line being electrified; * We walked for some 20 minutes to Hotel Senator Ház, located on Dobó István tér just off the main square, our home for two nights; * Eger turned out to be an historic baroque city and wine producing centre, with the mandatory hilltop castle and beautiful cathedral, also architectural remnants of a Turkish occupation which lasted most of the 17th century; * Sandra kept coming across familiar surnames, given the large population of Hungarian descent in her part of Saskatchewan; * 15 km in 15 mins, or 60 km/h (9 mls/37 mph), distance estimated; * Diesel Railcars (VTS, 1977-86).

4 OCT:

MÁV 35514 [EGER] EGERVÁR-SLAJKAVÖLGY [SZILVÁSVÁRAD]

PCd [Bzmot 248]

C*

PCd [Bzmot 318]

North to **SZILVÁSVÁRAD** for the day, with a ride on a narrow-gauge forest railway along the way – after spending the morning exploring Eger's walkable town centre, changing money, having photos dumped onto a compact disk, and attending the best tourist-oriented recital encountered during our holiday, an organ performance just before noon at the cathedral; * Depart 1353 from Egervár station (a 5-minute walk from our hotel and close to the upper entrance to the castle), arrive Slajkavölgy 1447, including stops at Almár, Mónosbél and Bélápatfalva; * This train was similar to ours into Eger the evening before, and passed through scenic Bükki Nemzeti Park; * 30 km in 54 mins, or 33 km/h (19 mls/21 mph), distance estimated.

ÁEV [EGER] SLAJKAVÖLGY LOVESPÁLYA-SZALAJKA FATYOLVÍZESÉS & RETURN

Ed [MK48-404]

C [3]

Depart 1510, arrive five minutes late at 1532, pulled by a diesel built in 1961 by Rába Magyar Vagon és Gépgyár; * Returning, depart 1540, arrive 1557, this MK48 Class locomotive running backwards; * 3 km in 17 mins, or 9 km/h (2 m/s/6 mph), upward direction; * No. MK48-404 (RMV, 1961; ex-MÁV 2037).

STATE FOREST RAILWAYS

The Szalajka line was a remnant of one of several narrow-gauge forest railways in Hungary operated by the Állami Erdei Vasutak and now oriented to the tourist trade. The 4-man crew included two brakemen who manually applied the brakes of the Coaches downgrade on the return – also upgrade when our diesel locomotive stalled on the hill.

MÁV 35523 SZILVÁSVÁRAD-EGERVÁR [EGER]

PCd [Bzmot 332]

C*

PCd [Bzmot 328]

Depart 1710, arrive 1805, after walking from the forest railway to the MÁV station located at the far end of Szilvásvárad – much farther than we expected, based on the Lonely Planet description, our route yielding no evidence of a town centre; * One of the local attractions was the Lippizaner State Stud Farm, these animals coming from Hungary, not Austria as sometimes thought.

5 OCT:**MÁV 5505 EGER-FÜZESABONY [BUDAPEST KELETI]**

Ee [V43 1306]

C [6]

To **BUDAPEST** via Füzesabony (our intention being to change there to a fast InterCity train), after spending our final morning in Eger visiting the Líceum, dating from 1765 and containing a beautiful period library, astronomical museum, and *camera obscura* (panoramic periscope) – overall, Eger being a must for anyone visiting this beautiful country; * Depart 1236, arrive 1253, behind another of 380 Class 43 electrics built as much as four decades ago and still mainstays on the MÁV system.



2000's-21: MÁV No. 5505 waiting to depart Eger for Füzesabony and Budapest Keleti, behind a Class V43 electric locomotive, with diesel railcars in the background to the right (2007/10/05) [PETER DAWES].

EUROPEAN ROLLING STOCK

Some of the Coaches on MÁV No. 5505 bore the "Eurofima" imprint (a non-profit consortium of railroads established to provide financing for rolling stock), as well as "DB" on mirrors (suggesting that these were refurbished German hand-me-downs). There was one smoking compartment in our Coach, which some local kids entered and occupied for 15 minutes or so before disembarking just as the train was about to depart. As a general comment, a lot of European (not just eastern, either) passenger cars featured steep steps, defective fold-down tables, dirty toilets and cramped legroom, especially where facing seats were concerned – surely, when combined with inaccessible stations and quick station stops, a nightmare for those with limited mobility.

MÁV IC567 [DEBRECEN] FÜZESABONY-BUDAPEST KELETI

Ee [V43 1100]

C*

R

C [3]

Depart 1303, arrive 1427 non-stop, on an InterCity train sporting a “Coffee Bar Restaurant” staffed by a disinterested attendant; * Using newly purchased 3-day transit passes, we took Metró Line 2 to Leo Panzió, our home for three nights, centrally located on the Pest (east) side of the city on busy V Kossuth Lajos street – later heading off to Nyugati main-line station in the hope of taking MÁV Nosztalgia’s *Candle-Lit Express*; * 126 km in 1 hr 24 mins, or 90 km/h (79 mls/56 mph); **[continued on next page]**

BUDAPEST METRÓ

... featured three lines, meeting at Deák tér station: • Line 1 (northeast-southwest, Pest side); • Line 2 (east-west; both Buda and Pest); and • Line 3 (north-south; Pest only). While Line 1 dated back to the late 19th century, the other two were built in the 1970’s by the Russians (as was the Praha metro). After arriving at Keleti station, we took Line 2 to Deák tér, mistakenly searching for our pension outside that station before backtracking one stop to Astoria. Subsequently, we departed for Nyugati station, not yet realizing that Line 3 Ferenciek tere station was right outside the pension – not my finest travel planning-and-execution moment!

MÁV NOSZTALGIA

I had tried several times by email to book seats on the *Candle-Lit Express*, an occasional evening dinner train operated out of Nyugati station by MÁV’s Nosztalgia division. Vintage parlour, bar and dining cars; fine Hungarian wine and music; “ambience of the past” on a 3-hour trip to nowhere in particular; scheduled to operate on Oct. 5 – lots of promises on the website, and this day just happened to be our anniversary. Alas, there was no sign of such a train on the information boards, and Nosztalgia’s office on the concourse was closed. There was consolation, a block from our pension, in the form of Centrál Kávéház, a beautifully restored coffee house with high ceilings, attentive waiters and Hungarian musicians.

* Next day, we took Line 3 to Deák tér to join up with Absolute Walking Tours for a 4-hour exploration of Budapest, our nicely sized group of 10 led by a personable young fellow who took us to see Hősök tere (Heroes Square, featuring statues of Magyar luminaries, with adjacent city park, museum of fine arts, contemporary art gallery, and baths), the opera house, Jewish quarter, Elizabeth bridge, the Dana (Danube), and castle over on the Buda side – where we happened upon a major Pálinka (sweet wine) festival on the castle grounds: * We made use of Metró Line 1 from Deák tér to Hősök tere, and back to Opera, after which Sandra and I did some tram riding on Route 2, north along the Danube to the majestic Parliament building, then south to Elizabeth bridge, nearby our pension.

7 OCT:

MÁV 2122/2135 BUDAPEST NYUGATI-ZEBEGÉNY [NOVÉ ZÁMKY] & RETURN

Ee [V43 1351]

C [6/4]

To **ZEBEGÉNY**, a town north of Budapest on the left bank of the Dana, on a Sunday morning train heading for Nové Zámky in Slovakia, this time accessing Nyugati directly from the correct Metró station, Ferenciek tere; * Depart 0855, arrive 0946, including stops at Vác, Kismaros and Nagymaros-Visegrád, happening upon a flea market just as church ended, then climbing up to a memorial overlooking the river, and finally testing the waters of the “Blue Danube”; * Our Coach featured a dirty washroom, broken compartment door and heavy graffiti – all too common on secondary Hungarian trains; * Alas, MÁV Nostalgie had operated its final Saturday excursion behind steam on this line the weekend before, terminating a bit farther on at Szob; * Returning, depart 1051, arrive 1143, with the same locomotive as on the outward train, it having turned at the Slovakian border; * 60 km in 51 mins, or 71 km/h (37 m/s/44 mph), distance estimated, outward direction.

MÁV HŪVÖSVÖLGY-SZÉCHENYI HEGY

Ed [Mk45-2006]

OBS

C

Onward to the Gyermekvasút (Children’s Railway) for a journey through the Buda Hills, via Metró Lines 2 and 3 to Moszkva tér, then Tram 56, featuring excellent street and reserved right-of-way running; * Depart 1315, arrive 1409, including stops at Szépjuhász né, János-hegy and Virágvölgy, on a short, crowded train hauled by a diesel built by Faur Romania in 1973; * 12 km in a scheduled 54 mins, or 13 km/h (7 m/s/8 mph); * No. Mk45-2006 (FRW, 1973).



2000's-22: A train of the Budapest Children's Railway at János-hegy, watched over by a diminutive station master, this one led by Romanian-built diesel No. Mk45-2002 (2007/10/07) [PETER DAWES].

GYERMEKVASÚT

The Children's Railway spanned 12 kilometres (7 miles) of the Buda hills, accessible by tram at one end, rack railway at the other, and a funicular mid-way. A vestige of communist youth days, it was famous for being manned – with the exception of the adult driver – by kids who saluted as the train departed each station.

MÁV 2266 BUDAPEST NYUGATI-MAGYAR VASÚTTÖRTÉNETI PARK

Cmd [BCmot 390]

To **MAGYAR VASÚTTÖRTÉNETI PARK** (Hungarian Railway Museum) for our final adventure of a busy day, starting with the rack railway back down the hill to Varósmajor, then Tram 56 to Moszkva tér and the Metró onward; * Depart Nygati 1540, arrive at the museum 1605 on a vintage diesel railcar; * Return by transit bus to Hero's Square, then Metró Lines 1 and 3 back to our pension (stopping at Oktagon for supper); * 5 km in 25 mins, or 12 km/h (3 mls/7 mph); * No. 390 (GED, 1928).

MAGYAR VASÚTTÖRTÉNETI PARK

Offering an impressive array of steam locomotives, the Hungarian Railway Museum was open in the late afternoon this day, but only the external exhibits. The museum advertised four transfer trips from Nyugati station to the park, this day provided by a diesel Railcar built in 1928 by Ganz Éstársaság Danubius; but we were forced to return downtown by transit bus after being informed that the final two scheduled return trips had been cancelled.

8 OCT:

MÁV/ÖBB EC62 BUDAPEST KELETI-WIEN WEST [MÜNCHEN]

Ee [1116 020-7]

C [5]

R [MÁV]

C* [2]

To **PADOVA** in northeastern Italy, via Wien and Venezia, departing 1310, arriving Wien West 1606, on a EuroCity train bound for München, including stops at Győr and the border town of Hegyeshalom, behind an ÖBB Class 1116 locomotive built by Siemens in 1999 and capable of running not only in Austria, but also Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia [**equipment ÖBB unless otherwise indicated**]; * 272 km in 2 hrs 56 mins, or 93 km/h (170 mls/58 mph); * No. 1116 020-7 (SMT, 1999).

EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND RESERVATION POLICY

... varied by railway and by type of train. Check out Cook's for Hungary: "Most **Domestic** InterCity (IC) and all InterPici (IP) trains have **compulsory** reservation, as shown by "R" in the tables. IC trains require a supplement of 520 HUF which includes the reservation fee. The price of the supplement may be reduced on certain journeys or on certain dates. Passengers having passes which include the supplement (e.g., Eurail) have to pay only the reservation fee of 130 HUF. For domestic journeys on **International** EC/IC/EN trains, the supplement is 390 HUF, but seat reservation is not possible. For International journeys on these trains, the supplement does not apply (unless shown) but seat reservation is possible (and is **compulsory** on trains IC **536/7**, IC **730/47**, IC **46/731**, as shown in individual tables)" (*European Timetable, Sept. 2007, p. 485*).

WIEN WEST ACTION

We spent the evening in Wien's city centre, eating bratwursts, drinking beer and riding trams around the Ring – this, after discovering that access from the Westbahnhof was no longer by tram as on previous visits, but by U-Bahn Line 3, completed in 2000. Night trains at Wien West included **Dacia** to Bucureşti, with two Sleepers (one Austrian; one Romanian), two Couchette cars (again, one Austrian and one Romanian) – also one Austrian Sleeper and one Couchette to Beograd, and one Bulgarian Sleeper to Sofia. Also, from train consist boards: **Donau-Spree-Kurier/Hans Albers** to Hamburg (one Sleeper; two Couchettes; two automobile transporters) and Berlin (one Sleeper; one Couchette); and **Donau-Kurier-Orient Express** to Dortmund (two Sleepers; two Couchettes) and Strasbourg (one Sleeper; two Couchettes) – the last-mentioned, the remnant of the *Orient Express* now terminating at Strasbourg, with TGV beyond for Paris.

8-9 OCT:

ÖBB IC 748-EN 237/TI 237-8 WIEN WEST-VENEZIA SANTA LUCIA *Allegro Don Giovanni*

Ee		WIEN-TARVISIO
Ee	[TI]	TARVISIO-VENEZIA [E 656 070]
C	[4]	WIEN-SALZBURG
S	[DB]	[MÜNCHEN] SALZBURG-VILLACH [ZAGREB]
T	[2] [DB]	"
C	[3] [DB]	"
C	[DB]	[MÜNCHEN] SALZBURG-VILLACH [BEOGRAD]
T		[PRAHA] SALZBURG-VENEZIA
T	[2]	
S		[A-CWL 61-87 70-90 204-2]
C	[2]	

Depart 2034, arrive Venezia Santa Lucia 0845 next morning, including stops at St. Pölten, Amstettin, Linz, Wels, Attnang-Puchiem, Salzburg (for 1 hour, 46 minutes), Bischofshofen, Schwarzach-St. Veit, Spital-Millstättersee, Villach, Tarvisio (It.), Udine and Venezia Mestre **[equipment ÖBB unless otherwise indicated (DB assumed for München cars)]**; * Sandra observed our train reversing no less than three times during the night, at Salzburg,

Villach and Udine; * 748 km in 12 hrs 11 mins, or 61 km/h (467 mls/38 mph); * No. E 656 070 (REGA, 1979); * MUn Sleeper No. A-CWL 61-87 70-90 204-2 (CIWL, 1999; 10tc).

ALLEGRO DON GIOVANNI

The *Allegro* in EuroNacht/Notte/Night/Nuit No. 237/8 was a brand name for trains joining Italy with Austria and Czechoslovakia, while *Don Giovanni* referred to the famous Mozart opera. This turned out to be a rather pedestrian train consisting of two Coaches, two Couchette cars and a Sleeper out of Wien West, attached to a regular InterCity service as far as Salzburg, where a Couchette was added from Praha. Furthermore (and based on Cook's), the six Venezia cars were joined at Salzburg for the run south as far as Villach by perhaps six more forming D297 *Lisinski*, a München-Zagreb/Beograd service named after a Croatian composer (number of cars and ownership assumed, not recorded). Where day service was concerned, there were two Wien-Venezia *Allegro* trains, *Johann Strauss* and *Stradivari*, on the direct route via Bruck an der Mur.



[italiarail.com/tickets]

COMPAGNIE DES WAGONS-LITS

Featuring 10 compartments and a food/refreshment preparation cubbyhole, our *Allegro Don Giovanni* Sleeper was one of four apparently built and leased by the Wagons-Lits Co., first to NS for Amsterdam-Milano service, then ÖBB – in fact, it still bore a *Slaaprijtuig* (Dutch for “Sleeping car”) logo. Annoyingly, the car was staffed by a W-L employee who didn't seem very interested in serving her customers. The company now operated in Austria, France, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom (e.g., providing catering on *Eurostar* Chunnel trains), and was to enter Spain by the end of 2007 (on AVE trains).



[accor.com]



2000's-23: *Allegro Don Giovanni* Sleeping car in Wien West Bahnhof, owned by Wagons-Lits but leased to ÖBB, sporting Dutch, German and French lettering (2007/10/08) [SANDRA DAWES].

VENEZIA BY VAPORETTO

Upon arrival in Venezia, we purchased transit passes good on the *Vaporettos*, water buses travelling along the various canals while dodging water taxis, gondolas and freight boats carrying produce, construction supplies, hotel laundry, even parcels (one was marked "DHL" after the courier company). Our trips on the first day comprised:

- express No. 3 from the Ferrovia (Santa Lucia train station) along the Canal Grande to Piazza San Marco;
- "N" from San Zaccaria across to Lido;
- No. 52 all the way around the north side of the city, past Murano island, and back into Piazzale Roma;
- local No. 1, this time along the Canal Grande all the way to Lido; and
- No. 52 around the south side back to the station – the most amazing sight being the brand new, 116,000-ton EMERALD PRINCESS of Princess Cruises sailing out of the heart of Venezia along the Canale di San Marco.



2000's-24: No. 3 express *Vaporetto* about to overtake our No. 1 local on the Canal Grande, Venezia, just south of the Ponte degli Scalzi (2007/10/10) [PETER DAWES].

9 OCT:

TI IR2110 VENEZIA SANTA LUCIA-PADOVA [MILANO CENTRALE]

Ee

C [11]

Depart 1719, arrive 1750, with one stop at Mestre, walking for 10 minutes to Albergo Sant Antonio, on Via San Fermo, our home for two nights; * Padova was a university town and worthy destination on its own, featuring an unusual, French-built, rubber-tired tram operating along Corso del Popolo to the station, part of the street reserved for this purpose (there was one track in the pavement, both to guide the vehicle and return current); * An evening walk through Piazza Cavour revealed hordes of mostly university students drinking wine purchased from small bars – also the popular Ristorante Pizzeria Pe Pen, offering excellent food to a varied clientele; * 37 km in 31 mins, or 71 km/h (23 m/s/44 mph).

TRENITALIA

... was now the train-operating division of Ferrovie dello Stato (State Railways), the infrastructure being handled by the Rete Ferroviaria Italiana division. This was the trend in the European Union, the intention apparently being to open the operating side to competition while placing the infrastructure on a level playing field with other modes of transportation.



[trenitalia.com]

10 OCT:

TI IC603 [MILANO CENTRALE] PADOVA-VENEZIA SANTA LUCIA

Ee [E 402 031]

C [10] [SBB]

Back to **VENEZIA** for the morning, departing 0838, arriving 0909, with a Trenitalia Class 402 electric built by Sofer-Ansaldo leading 10 Schweizerische Bundesbahnen/Chemin de fer fédéraux Suisse/Ferrovie Federali Svizzere (Swiss Federal Railways) Coaches – probably from the SBB-TI *Cisalpin* pool of equipment used between Swiss and northern Italian points; * By local Vaporetto No. 1 to San Zaccaria, then a leisurely stroll all the way back to the station, via Piazza San Marco, Ponte di Rialto, then vegetable, fruit and fish markets; * No. E 402 031 (SOFA, 1995).

TI IC610 VENEZIA SANTA LUCIA-PADOVA [MILANO CENTRALE]

Ee [E 414 132]

C [10]

Ee [E 414 115]

Depart 1251, arrive 1323, powered by two Class 414 electrics; * While Venezia lived up to its billing as a truly amazing city (partly because of its dependence on water courses for transportation), it was ridiculously overcrowded with tourists (like ourselves), even in October; * Upon our return, we visited some of Padova's further charms, such as the Orto Botanico (oldest botanical garden in Europe) and Ragione palace, before

enjoying another evening meal at Pe Pen – but not until opening time of 2000 hours, which apparently was when Italians began coming out to eat; * Nos. 414 115 (*ex-404 115*), 414 132 (*ex-404 132*) (*TRV, 1996-7*).

11 OCT

TI ES9465 [UDINE] PADOVA-FIRENZE SANTA MARIA NOVELLA [ROMA TERMINI] ETR 500

Ee [E 93 83 7 404 616-8]

C [7]

R

C* [4]

Ee [E 93 83 7 404 615-0]

To **FIRENZE** on a second-generation, ETR 500 high-speed train, departing 0908, arriving eight minutes late at 1131, stopping at Rovigo, Ferrara and Bologna – after which we walked for five minutes and checked into Hotel Globus, via Sant'Antonino, for one night; * 220 km in a scheduled 2 hrs 15 mins, or 98 km/h (*137 mls/61 mph*); * Nos. 93 83 7 404 615-0 & 616-8 (*TRV, 2005-6?*).

ETR 500

The second-generation, ETR (*Elettro Treno Rapido*) 500 train set forming our ES 9465 train was built by the TREVI consortium, made up of Alstom, Ansaldo Breda, Bombardier and Firemaeda. They were said to be capable of 300 km/h (*186 mph*) top speed, our slow 98-kilometre (*61-mile*) per hour average between Padova and Firenze due to the lack of high-speed trackage on that segment – although it proceeded to stretch its legs on the Firenze-Roma *Direttissima* high-speed line. One of our Venezia-Padova trains (IR 610) also was powered by ETR 500 locomotives, but these were first-generation versions now hauling conventional cars.

DUELLING EUROSTARS

Trenitalia's Inter-Regio No. 610, Venezia-Padova/Milano, was marked "EUROSTAR CITY ITALIA", while No. 9465, Udine/Padova-Firenze/Roma, was prefixed "ES" for Eurostar – this apparently not violating the Chunnel brand name.

CHAOTIC FIRENZE

On the one hand, a city apparently housing one-quarter of the world's art treasures; on the other, narrow streets and squares, deep in a river valley, hordes of tourists, and horrible air quality. This was Firenze! No metro, no light rail and no trams. Even where motor vehicles were excluded, that Italian cultural phenomenon – the scooter – rushed at you from around corners, with its high-pitched whine and belching exhaust. Some ATAF transit buses advertised that they used natural gas and were therefore “green”; but that was a delusion. Firenze could learn lessons from other European cities as to how to provide good public transit, control the motor vehicle, and improve air quality.



[ataf.net]

12 OCT:

TI 3133/22386 FIRENZE SANTA MARIA NOVELLA-PISA CENTRALE [LIVORNO] & RETURN

Ee [E 646 146/?]

C* [6]

To **PISA** for the afternoon, subsequent to joining a 3-hour morning walking tour taking in most of the main Firenze attractions, including Piazza della Repubblica, Palazzo and Ponte Vecchio, and Piazza del Duomo (including a tour of this famous domed church); * Depart 1427, arrive 1533, behind a Class 646 electric built by Savigliano, including stops at Lastra a Signa, Empoli and Pontedera; * It was a brisk, 15-minute walk from the station to the Romanesque Piazza dei Miracoli, featuring a cathedral, baptistry and the famous Leaning Tower, where hundreds of tourists (mostly Japanese, but a surprising number of Chinese as well) swarmed over the lawns, snapping photos of each other pretending, *tai-chi* like, to hold up the tower – until forced back over the fence by whistle blowing *cabineri*; * Returning, depart 1754, arrive 1903, on a local service making several additional stops – both trains having, in addition to an electric locomotive, a *Carrozza pilota* (cab control Coach) at the other end; * 81 km in 1 hr 6 mins, or 74 km/h (51 mls/46 mph), *Carrozza pilota* leading on the return train; * No. 646 146 (SAV, 1965).



2000's-25: Futuristic-looking Trenitalia ETR 600 *Nuovo Pendolino* high-speed train No. IC 709 *Canova* pauses in Firenze's Campo di Marte station, on its evening journey from Udine to Roma (2007/10/12) [PETER DAWES].

A TRAIN-RIDING FIRST

Trenitalia No. 3133 was a crowded, Friday afternoon, Firenze-Pisa-Livorno regional service, featured something we'd not seen before, not even in the poorer, eastern European countries: a woman, baby in arms, going through the cars begging for money.

12-13 OCT:

TI/SNCF EN226 [ROMA TERMINI] FIRENZE CAMPO DI MARTE-PARIS BERCY Palatino

Ee		ROMA-DOMODOSSOLA [E 402 009]
Ee	[SBB]	DOMODOSSOLA-VALLORBE
Ee	[SNCF]	VALLORBE-PARIS [26014 Dôle]
T	[2]	
S	[4]	[61 83 72-90 010-9]

R

T [6]

To **SCUNTHORPE**, North Lincolnshire, via Paris, London and Doncaster, departing 10 minutes late at 2103, arriving eight minutes early at 0902, including revenue stops at Bologna, Parma, Placenza and Dijon (Fr.), behind Italian (Class 202, Fiore Ansaldo), Swiss (unrecorded), and French (Class 26000, Alstom) electrics **[equipment TI unless otherwise indicated]**; * Another overnight train was standing in Dijon station at 0630, possibly a late running, Venezia-Paris, EN220 *Stendahl*; * 1,136 km in a scheduled 12 hrs 17 mins, or 93 km/h (709 mls/58 mph); * No. 402 009 (FAN, 1995); * No. 26014 (ALS, 1988-98); * MU Sleeper No. 61 83 72-90 010-9 (FF, 1972, 13tc; ex-CIWL).



[railplus.com.au]

PALATINO

... was a “Trainhotel Artesia” featuring: a Restaurant car; four Sleepers; two, 4-berth per compartment Couchette cars (including ladies-only compartments); and six, 6-berth per compartment Couchette cars – but no ordinary Coaches. Its Sleepers were lettered “Treno Notte Class” or “Treno Notte Excelsior”, meaning Night Train standard and upscale Excelsior classes, respectively – ours being one of the former, probably a 13-compartment MU car built in 1972 by Fiat Ferroviaria. This train had been operating in recent years over the SBB, instead of its traditional route via Modane, requiring operational stops at Domodossola (It.) and Vallorbe (Swit.), and it arrived and departed from Paris Bercy rather than nearby Lyon station. Voyages Wasteels, not Wagons-Lits, staffed and provisioned the train, another indication that contracts for these overnight services were now up for bid. (Likewise on sister train *Stendahl*, Venezia-Paris, another Trainhotel Artesia.)



[wasteels.be]

13 OCT:

SNCF/ES 9031 PARIS NORD-LONDON WATERLOO INTERNATIONAL Eurostar

Ee
 C [5]
 CfL
 C [6]
 CfL
C* [5]
 Ee [3207 Michel Hollard]

Depart 1301, arrive 1457, stopping at Lille Europe, Calais Fréthun and Ashford International (Eng.) **[equipment owned by ES]**; * We took Métro lines 14 and 4 from Bercy to Gare du Nord to drop off our packs, then Line 4 back to St-Germain-des-Prés for croissants and coffee at Café Les Deux Magots – just as during our 2003 return from Spain to England; * Onward to King’s Cross by Northern and Piccadilly lines; * 494 km in 2 hrs 56 mins, or 169 km/h (308 mls/105 mph), taking into account the 1-hour time difference.

EUROSTAR WORK-HORSE

We transited Paris on the occasion of the 2007 Rugby Union World Cup semi-final between England and France, scheduled that evening at Parc des Princes. The Gare du Nord, indeed the city at large, was packed with England supporters, 14,000 of whom had travelled by *Eurostar* – fully demonstrating the capability of this high-speed system. Our Eurostar (UK)-owned train set was named in honour of Michel Hollard, a French spy who devised espionage networks during World War II (particularly utilizing SNCF employees) and passed on vital information on German V-1 flying bomb launch sites.

GNER 1700 LONDON KING’S CROSS-DONCASTER [NEWCASTLE] E225

Ee [91108 City of Leeds]
C* [5]
 CfeL
 C [3]
 DVT [82209]

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2007



2000's-26: Eurostar and Thalys TGV's rest in Paris Gare du Nord, the former in from London, the latter some combination of Amsterdam, Köln and Bruxelles/Brussel (2007/10/13) [PETER DAWES].

Depart 1700, arrive 1831, stopping at Stevenage and Peterborough, on an Electric 225 service headed by a Class 91 locomotive built by British Rail Engineering Ltd. (BREL), with a Driving Van Trailer at the rear; * Mid-train was a "Cafe Bar", formerly called Restaurants on GNER; * 251 km 1 hr 31 mins, or 165 km/h (157 mls/103 mph); * No. 91108 (BREL, 1989-91; ex-BR,GNER 91008, GNER Thomas Cook)/Ir-NXEC); * No. 82209 (MC, 1988; ex-BR/Ir-NXEC).

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY

GNER's 1700 service from King's Cross to Doncaster and Newcastle was staffed by a Newcastle-based crew speaking in thick "Geordie" accents, making on-train announcements – not to mention the refreshment-cart guy – difficult to understand. Not as difficult as Czech, Slovak, or Hungarian, granted; but a challenge, nonetheless.

FTPE 1853 [MANCHESTER AIRPORT] DONCASTER-SCUNTHORPE [CLEETHORPES]

Cmd [3] [185 109]

Depart 1853, arrive 1923 non-stop, on a Siemens-built, Desiro family Class 185 DMU train – our friend Eva driving us to her place, where we were to stay for the next three nights; * 37 km in 33 mins, or 67 km/h (23 mls/42 mph); * No. 185 109 (SMT, 2005-7?); * We spent the next two days visiting with Eva and Margaret and generally recuperating from our continental whirlwind, the highlight being a pub called “The Honest Lawyer” (no jokes, please), in which Sandra enjoyed that lunchtime English culinary delight, “Chip Butty” (cheese and chips smothered in mayo), while I discussed football with a longtime contributor to Scunthorpe United’s programme.

FIRST TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS

Since our 2003 holiday, First TransPennine Express had introduced faster services on the Cleethorpes line and other routes based on Manchester (airport and city). FTPE was part of Scottish-based FirstGroup, a huge bus operator which also owned all or part of Capital Connect, Great Western, Hull Trains, ScotRail and GB Railfreight. (Unlike the others, Hull Trains didn’t hold a franchise, but rather operated trains between Hull and King’s Cross on an “open access” basis, competing with GNER.)

16 OCT:

FTPE 0800 [CLEETHORPES] SCUNTHORPE-DONCASTER [MANCHESTER AIRPORT]

Cmd [3] [185 107]

To **LEYBURN** in the North Yorkshire Dales, ancestral lands of Sandra’s father, via Doncaster, York, Northallerton and Bedale; * Depart 0800, arrive Doncaster seven minutes early at 0833.

DONCASTER HUB

This southern Yorkshire city was a longtime railway centre, featuring not only the three lines we used on this holiday (south to London; north to York; east to Scunthorpe), but three others (west to Sheffield; southwest to Birmingham; southeast to Lincoln). Half-a-dozen rail enthusiasts, equipped with serious cameras and bulky, dog-eared national timetables, manned the platforms during the morning of 16 OCT, watching GNER E225’s and Virgin Voyager diesel trains, but paying special attention to the arrival and departure of a retired HST set being used as a track-geometry train.

GNER 0917 [LONDON KING'S CROSS] DONCASTER-YORK [NEWCASTLE] E225

Ee [91108 City of Leeds]

C* [5]

CfeL

C [3]

DVT [82209]

Depart 13 minutes behind schedule at 0930, arrive 37 minutes late at 1018, non-stop up the East Coast Main Line, this being the same train set we'd had three days earlier from King's Cross to Doncaster; * 52 km in a scheduled 24 mins, or 130 km/h (32 mls/81 mph).

SORRY BUT IT'S VIRGIN'S FAULT!

Our GNER E225 service from Doncaster to York crept along for much of the way, at one point grinding to a halt – the service manager first apologizing for the delays and blaming it on signalling problems, then triumphantly asserting it was Virgin Trains' fault because one of their cross-country trains had "broken down" ahead. (That would have been Virgin's Birmingham-Newcastle, Voyager DMU service departing Doncaster at 0922.) Three further apologies followed, each time ending with a reminder that it was Virgin's, not GNER's, fault. We never found out what the real problem was, but our train did catch up to the very same "broken down" Voyager just as it was pulling out of York station for Newcastle.

FTPE 1026 [MANCHESTER PICCADILLY] YORK-NORTHALLERTON [MIDDLESBROUGH]

Cmd [3] [185 127]

Depart 1026, arrive 1057, with one stop at Thirsk, on another FTPE Class 185 regional train, this one originating at Manchester Piccadilly and going to Middlesbrough; * We then caught a Dales & District bus westward to **Leyburn**, conveniently from a stop right across from the station, changing at Bedale; * This was absolutely beautiful countryside, made famous by the writings of James Herriot – Sandra's great-grandfather having worked on railway and road construction in the area in the late 19th century before emigrating to Canada; * Our bus passed over the Wensleydale Railway, a preserved line not operating this day but worth a look on a future visit; * Upon our return to Northallerton, we visited the North Yorkshire County Council Record Office, to gather information on how best to track down relatives on a future visit; * 48 km in 31 mins, or 92 km/h (30 mls/57 mph).

FTPE 1552 [MIDDLESBROUGH] NORTHALLERTON-YORK [MANCHESTER PICCADILLY]

Cmd [3] [185 ???]

Returning, depart 1552, arrive York 1623.

GNER 1656 [NEWCASTLE] YORK-DONCASTER [LONDON KING'S CROSS] HST

Ed [43039?]

C [2]

BC

C* [6]

Ed [43095 Perth]

Depart 1656, arrive 1720, non-stop; * Nos. 43039, 43095 (BREL, 1976-82; ex-BR/r-NXEC).

HST IN ELECTRIFIED COUNTRY

GNER's Newcastle-King's Cross service was a crowded High Speed Train (HST), scheduled for the same 24 minutes as our northbound E225 that morning. HST's on this line normally originated north of Edinburgh in non-electrified territory, in fact the rear locomotive on this trip was named *Perth* in honour of the city located at the base of the Scottish Highlands.

FTPE 1742 [MANCHESTER AIRPORT] DONCASTER-SCUNTHORPE [CLEETHORPES]

Cmd [3] [185 ???]

Depart nine minutes late at 1751, arrive 24 minutes in arrears at 1831 – the train manager announcing that we were “waiting for a platform” at 2-platform Scunthorpe station, possibly due to one track being blocked by engineering work or another train.

17 OCT:

FTPE 0750 [MANCHESTER AIRPORT] SCUNTHORPE-CLEETHORPES

Cmd [3] [185 115]

To **CHADDESLEY CORBETT**, Worcestershire, via Cleethorpes, Grimsby, Lincoln, Leicester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Birmingham (again), and Blakedown – this day being for rail-roaming, using no less than eight trains, the initial ones travelling through new countryside; * Depart 0750, arrive Cleethorpes 0846,

stopping at Barnetby, Habrough and Grimsby, although we could have changed at Barnetby for Lincoln; * 47 km in 56 mins, or 51 km/h (29 mls/32 mph).

NR 0900 CLEETHORPES-GRIMSBY TOWN [BARTON-UPON-HUMBER]

Cmd [153 363]

Depart with a few other passengers from a desolate Cleethorpes station at 0900, arrive 0909 (estimated), with one stop at Grimsby Docks – this North Sea port still functioning as a fishing town, but not on the scale of the old days when fish trains departed every day for many of Britain's largest cities; * Built by Leyland Motors in the early 1990's, these Class 153 DMU's were called Super Sprinters, although Wikipedia reports (with English humour) that they were "also sometimes derogatorily referred to as 'Dogboxes' or 'V1 Flying Bombs'/'Scuds' – as they take off but one has no idea where they might end up"; * 5 km in 9 mins, or 33 km/h (3 mls/21 mph); * No. 153 363 (LLD, 1991-2; ex-BR,RRNE,ATN).

NORTHERN RAIL

Successor to Arriva Trains North and First North Western franchises, Northern Rail operated local and regional services on several routes, including Cleethorpes-Barton. It was owned by Serco and the Dutch NedRailways, the latter a subsidiary of NS.

CT 0928 GRIMSBY TOWN-LINCOLN [NEWARK NORTH GATE]

Cmd [153 375]

Depart 0928, arrive 1022, over former Great Central lines, stopping at Habrough, Barnetby and Market Rasen – this Class 153 operated by Central Trains; * 71 km in 54 mins, or 79 km/h (44 mls/49 mph).

CENTRAL TRAINS

... continued to operate in the West Midlands (especially the Birmingham area) and other parts of middle England and was owned by National Express Group, a huge bus operator, like FirstGroup having considerable operations in Canada. It also owned Midland Mainline, Gatwick Airport Express, and "one" (another brand name). In the volatile franchise system, National Express was set to give up, in November of 2007, both Central Trains and Midland Mainline, while taking on Great North Eastern.

CT 1036 LINCOLN-LEICESTER

Cmd [2] [156 404]

Depart 1036, arrive 1222 on another CT service, this time over former Great Northern and Midland lines, including stops at Newark Castle, Nottingham and Loughborough; * Also called Super Sprinters, Class 156 DMU's were constructed by Metropolitan Cammell in the late 1970's; * 99 km in 1 hr 46 mins, or 56 km/h (62 mls/35 mph); * No. 156 404 (MC, 1978-9; ex-BR/ir-EMT).

CT 1253 [STANSTED AIRPORT] LEICESTER-BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET

Cmd [3] [170 107]

Depart 1253, arrive six minutes late at 1353 on yet another CT service, over a former London & North Western route with stops at Nuneaton and Coleshill Parkway; * Originating at London's Stansted airport, this one was formed of a 3-car, Class 170 Turbostar DMU built by ADtranz in the late 1990's; * 62 km in a scheduled 54 mins, or 69 km/h (39 mls/43 mph); * No. 170 107 (ADT, 1998-9/ir-CRC).

VT 1400 BIRMINGHAM NEW ST.-WOLVERHAMPTON [EDINBURGH]

Cmd [5] [221 128 Cap't John Smith]

Depart 1400, arrive 1421 non-stop, on a Virgin cross-country train heading for the Scottish capital, our Bombardier-built Super Voyager named after a 17th century English soldier/sailor/author – this being a nostalgic visit to my mother's home town; * 21 km in 21 mins, or 60 km/h (13 mls/37 mph); * No. 221 128 (BBD, 2002/ir-CRC).

BIG CHANGES FOR VIRGIN

Virgin's Cross Country franchise would be turned over to Arriva in November, 2007, although Virgin would continue to operate cross-country trains over the West Coast Main Line between Birmingham and Glasgow/Edinburgh.

VIRGIN'S SUPER VOYAGER FLEET

... consisted of 44 Bombardier-built, Diesel Multiple Unit tilt trains made up of five powered cars: first-class Driving Cab Coach; two standard-class Coaches; standard-class Coach with Buffet counter/shop; and standard-class Driving Cab Coach. There was a cramped feeling about the Coach interiors, but the washrooms were large enough to accommodate persons using mobility devices.

MMR 1535 WOLVERHAMPTON ST. GEORGE'S-BIRMINGHAM SNOW HILL

Cme [6 Alan Garner]

Depart 1535, arrive 1610, on a Midland Metro Light Rail Train making 21 stops, including Bilston Central, Wednesbury Great Western Street, Dudley and The Hawthorns (home of West Bromwich Albion football club); * Operated by National Express Group, Metro occupied the old Great Western Railway right-of-way and utilized trams built by Ansaldo Trasporti, ours named after a Wolverhampton city councillor and key backer of the project; * 20 km in 35 mins, or 34 km/h (12 mls/21 mph); * No. 6 (ANST, 1999).

CT 1703 [BIRMINGHAM MOOR STREET] SNOW HILL-BLAKEDOWN [KIDDERMINSTER]

Cmd [3] [150 016]

Depart 1703, arrive 1749, at the height of Birmingham's commuter rush, on a 3-car, Class 150 DMU train built by BREL in the mid-1980's and operated by Central Trains for Network West Midlands, the 10 stops including Smethwick, Rowly Regis and Stourbridge Jct; * Onward to **Chaddesley Corbett** by automobile for three nights, courtesy Richard and Sylvia, friends from our 2003 QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 voyage – their home a welcome respite from our somewhat hectic travelling regime; * 26 km in 46 mins, or 34 km/h (16 mls/21 mph); * No. 150 016 (BREL, 1985-6; ex-BR/Ir-LMID); • **18 OCT:** By automobile to **Dudley**, half-way between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, to visit a museum, returning via Tipton to sample local brews;

BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM

... was located on top of an abandoned coal mine and featured relocated period shops, pubs, midway rides, coal-mine tour, and several preserved trams and trolley buses – a bit like Fort Edmonton Park. Richard James (a.k.a. "Grorty Dick"), a tour operator we'd met quite by chance in Wolverhampton back in 2003, kindly took the day off to be our expert guide, the highlight being a boat ride through Dudley Canal Tunnel (once part of Britain's extensive canal system), then into limestone caves.

• **19 OCT:** Again by automobile, this time to **Ironbridge**, near Telford, Shropshire, to visit the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, including Coalbrookdale, birthplace of the Industrial Revolution during the 17th and 18th centuries and featuring the world's first cast-iron bridge (over the Severn River), first coke-fired blast furnace (called "Bedlam"), and no less than 10 museums, including the Museum of Iron and Blisls Hill Victorian Town – the transportation arteries being of particular interest (river, canal, viaduct, even an inclined

plane down to the valley floor).



2000's-27: Midland Metro's 1535 service ready to depart Wolverhampton St. George's for Birmingham Snow Hill (2007/10/17) [PETER DAWES].

20 OCT:

FGW 0927 [HEREFORD] WORCESTER SHRUB HILL-LONDON PADDINGTON

Cmd [5] [180 108]

To **LONDON** to attend a football match, departing 0927, arriving 1132, the Beardshaw's having dropped us off at Shrub Hill station, our eight stops including Evesham, Moreton-in-Marsh, Oxford, Reading and Slough; * We took the Hammersmith & City line to Shepherd's Bush and walked the short distance south to check into the Brook Green for one night, then proceeded to Loftus Road to see Queens Park Rangers tie 1-1 with Ipswich Town (Jason de Vos, longtime captain of Canada's national team, starring in the Ipswich back four), joined supporters afterwards at the White Horse "boozer" on Uxbridge Road, and finally returned to the Brook Green to watch England lose to South Africa in the Rugby Union World Cup final in Paris – the normally crowded streets almost deserted as people watched the game; * 194 km in 2 hrs 5 mins, or 93 km/h (121 mls/58 mph); * Class 180 (ALS, 2000-1); * Car numbers: 59908, 56908, 55908, **54908**, 50908.

FIRST GREAT WESTERN

The Great Western Trains TOC of our 1998 holiday had morphed into First Great Western by 2007 – still the dominant carrier from London to the West Country, southern Wales, and adjacent parts.



[nationalrail.co.uk/tocs_maps]

SCHOOL BREAK CHAOS

Our Worcester-to-Paddington, Class 180, Adelante DMU train was built by Alstom in the early 2000's, made up of two "Driving Motors" and three "Intermediate Motors". We happened upon a school-break week, meaning that this Saturday morning, Hereford-originating service was packed to overflowing a couple of stops out of Worcester, entire families standing in the vestibules, accompanied by many suitcases – which some passengers tried to wheel down the cramped aisles.

21 OCT:

FCC 1134 LONDON BLACKFRIARS-HAYWARDS HEATH

Cme [4] [319 378]

To **TORQUAY**, Devon, on the last, frantic phase of our holiday, via Haywards Heath, Horsted Keynes, Sheffield Park, Kingscote, East Grinstead, Oxted, London (again), Plymouth, St. Austell, Penzance, St. Erth, St. Ives, St. Erth (again), St. Austell (again), Plymouth (again), and Newton Abbot!; * We started by taking the Central and Victoria lines to King's Cross to drop off our packs in left luggage for the day and meet up with Geoff Sarbutt (London-based owner of the excellent Amtrak car website, *gobytrain.us*), for a tour of the almost finished St. Pancras station redevelopment, then hired a taxi to Blackfriars station – a first-ever visit to this secondary London station; * Depart from there at 1134, arrive Haywards Heath six minutes late at 1249, on a 4-car, Class 319, dual third-rail/overhead-collection EMU built by BREL in 1990 (Driving Trailer, Intermediate Motor, Intermediate Trailer and Driving Trailer), then onward to the Bluebell Railway at **Horsted Keynes** by means of a taxi, as we'd just missed the bi-hourly bus service; * 56 km in 1 hr 15 mins, or 45 km/h (35 m/s/28 mph); * No. 319 378 (BREL, 1990; ex-BR, TL).

FIRST CAPITAL CONNECT

... operated services between Bedford and Brighton through the heart of London, as well as out of King's Cross to places such as Cambridge and Peterborough. It was the successor to the Thames Link and West Anglia Great Northern franchises.

ENGINEERING WORKS

Our journey to the Bluebell Railway was cursed by engineering works, first on the Hammersmith & City east of Paddington, then on First Capital Connect to Haywards Heath. The latter involved a convoluted routing through south London (instead of the normal path via London Bridge), thereafter stops at East Croydon, Three Bridges and Gatwick – our train terminating at Haywards Heath instead of going on to Brighton as was the norm. We would encounter a number of such disruptions over the next three days, some anticipated (thanks to Geoff), others a surprise.

BBL 1342 [KINGSCOTE] HORSTED KEYNES-SHEFFIELD PARK

Es	[2]	[34028 Eddystone, 34007 Wadebridge]
OL	[LNER]	[43909]
C	[2]	[S35448,S5034]
RB		[S1818]
C	[2]	[S16210,S25728]

Depart 1342, arrive 1355 non-stop over this former London, Brighton & South Coast segment, behind not one but two former Southern steam locomotives, both built at the end of World War II in the railway's own shops **[equipment marked SOU unless indicated otherwise]**; * Some cars were lettered for a Southern train of old, *The Atlantic Coast Express*, which ran from Waterloo to Plymouth and other coastal towns; * Oldest car encountered this day was Great Northern "directors saloon" No. 43909, built in 1897 and lettered for successor, London & North Eastern; * 7 km in 13 mins, or 32 km/h (4 mls/20 mph); * Nos. 34028 (SLL), 34007 (WBL) (both SRW, 1945-6; ex-SOU, BR); * S16210 (BR, 1961; ex-BR 7210); * No. S1818 (BR, 1960; ex-BR); * No. 43909 (GNRW, 1897, EFH; ex-GNR,LNER 706, BR DE942090).



2000's-28: Former Southern Railway Bullied Light Pacifics 34007 WADEBRIDGE and 34028 EDDYSTONE at Sheffield Park on the Bluebell Railway (2007/10/21) [PETER DAWES].

THE GIANTS OF STEAM

Our first visit to the Bluebell occurred back in 1984, shepherded by Tom Clark – who had phoned best wishes for an enjoyable outing to our hotel, this 2007 Sunday morning, as we were having breakfast. I'd reserved 1st class passes for the "The Giants of Steam" day, featuring three Bullied Light Pacific 4-6-2 West Country class locomotives once operated by the Southern Railway, a fourth scratched due to mechanical problems. Since our first visit, the line had been extended north to Kingscote in 1994, and would reach East Grinstead in 2013. (Also planned was a branch from Horsted Keynes to Haywards Heath.)

BBL 1510 SHEFFIELD PARK-KINGSCOTE

Es	[SOU]	[21C123 Blackmoor Vale]
C	[2]	[4957,S1482S,S1464S]
P	[PLC]	[76 Lilian]

C [2] [S4957,2515]

Depart 1510, arrive 1540, with one stop mid-way at Horsted Keynes, behind just one Pacific locomotive and luxuriating in Pullman LILIAN, built by Metropolitan Carriage & Wagon Works in 1928 **[equipment marked SOU unless indicated otherwise]**; * 15 km in 30 mins, or 30 km/h (9 mls/19 mph); * No. 21C123 (SRW, 1946, BUL; ex-SOU,BR); * No. 76 (MCWW, 1928; ex-PLC,LNER 229, 482, BCC 99202, Eve, Lilian, VSOE).

BBL 1615 KINGSCOTE-HORSTED KEYNES [SHEFFIELD PARK]

Es [21C123 Blackmoor Vale]

C [3] [4279,S1482S,S1464S]

P [PLC] [76 Lilian]

C [2] [S4957,2515]

Depart 1615, arrive 1628 non-stop with the same consist, only as far as Horsted Keynes **[equipment marked SOU unless indicated otherwise]**; * 8 km in 13 mins, or 36 km/h (5 mls/22 mph).

BBL 1635 [SHEFFIELD PARK]-HORSTED KEYNES-KINGSCOTE

Es [BR] [80151]

P [2] [PLC] [64 Christine]

PK [175 Fingall]

RB [1838]

C [3] [25769,1309,6686]

Depart 1635, arrive 1648 non-stop, in Pullman Kitchen FINGALL, built in 1926 by the Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Co. **[equipment marked SOU unless indicated otherwise]**; * One of the last steam locomotives built for British Rail, Class 4MT 2-6-4 No. 80151 substituted for out-of-action, Battle of Britain Class No. 34081 92 SQUADRON; * Onward to **East Grinstead** on Bluebell's own vintage bus, then a Southern Railway chartered bus to **Oxted**, given that engineering works were underway on this stretch; * No. 80151 (BR, 1957; ex-BR); * Fingall (BRCW, 1926, ex-PLC 175, LMM, IWSR).



[bluebell-railway.co.uk]

SR 1812 OXTED-CLAPHAM JCT. [LONDON VICTORIA]

Cme [5] [377 135]

Depart 1812 (estimated), arrive Clapham Jct. 1848, on a Class 377 Electrostar built by Bombardier, stops including Riddlesdown, Sandstead and East Croydon – whereupon we caught a South West Trains service to Wimbledon for a curry at Ahmed’s, Tom Clark’s favourite eatery before he moved to Australia; * Return by SWT train, this time into Waterloo, then Northern and Piccadilly lines to King’s Cross to retrieve our packs, and finally Victoria and Bakerloo lines to Paddington; * 29 km in 36 mins, or 48 km/h (18 mls/30 mph).

SOUTHERN REPLACEMENT BUS CHAOS

After finding at East Grinstead that our London train had been cancelled, we caught a “replacement bus” to Oxted, only to discover the usual, London-direction platform chained off, and passengers reversing gears to reach the other platform. There were no Southern Railway employees in sight, causing the drivers of several buses parked in the forecourt to attempt to direct people. When I subsequently described the scene to the guard on the train, he apologized, explaining that he’d been trying to rouse his Oxted station colleagues by radio, to no avail. Then he turned his attention to a girl who had just come through our car begging for money, and made an announcement asking passengers not to encourage this practice by giving her money.

21-22 OCT:

FGW 2350 LONDON PADDINGTON-PLYMOUTH *Night Riviera*

Ed [57605 Totnes Castle]

C [2]

BL

S [3] [? 10584, ?]

Depart 2350, arrive next morning at 0625, stopping at Reading and Exeter, on First Great Western’s *Night Riviera* service, available for occupancy on Platform 1 at 2230 and powered by a Class 57 diesel remanufactured by Brush Traction from a 40-year-old, Class 47 unit; * Onward by replacement bus, departing Plymouth station forecourt at 0635, arriving **St. Austell** 0800; * 363 km in 6 hrs 35 mins, or 55 km/h (227 mls/34 mph); * No. 57605 (BR/BTF, 1964-5/BTF 2004; ex-BR 47206); * No. 10584 (BREL, 1981-4, 13dc; ex-BR).

THE NIGHT RIVIERA

First Great Western's only overnight train normally ran all the way to Penzance in Cornwall, but this week was terminating at Plymouth, with a replacement bus operating between there and St. Austell, where another train was available. Now owned by leasing company Porterbrook, the three SLE Sleepers were sister cars of those used on ScotRail's *Caledonian Sleeper* trains. I'd been unable to reserve a compartment through either RailEurope in advance, or in person at Paddington, but finally succeeded over the phone from Scunthorpe. Because there were only a dozen or so passengers in the Sleepers, our attendant provided us with ensuite compartments – a nice touch which unfortunately didn't make up for having to vacate at 0625. (This service traditionally offered set-out Sleepers for Plymouth, but these had recently been discontinued.)

22 OCT:

FGW 0812 [BODMIN PARKWAY] ST. AUSTELL-PENZANCE HST

Ed [43021 David Austin – Cartoonist]

C* [5]

BC

C [2]

Ed [43185 Great Western]

Depart 0812, arrive 0918 on an HST train originating at Bodmin Parkway rather than the customary Plymouth, stopping at Truro, Redruth, Camborne, Hayle and St. Erth; * While Bodmin was located east of St. Austell, it apparently was more convenient and quicker to deliver us to the latter place; * This HST's performance wasn't exactly high speed, averaging only 59 kilometres (37 miles) per hour; but the locomotives sported names honouring predecessor Great Western Railway and a cartoonist of some note; * 65 km in 1 hr 6 mins, or 59 km/h (41 mls/37 mph).



[Great Western Railway logo
(steammuseum.org.uk)]

NO SCILLY ISLES

Another consequence of engineering works was that we had to cancel our planned outward-by-ship, return-by-air, side trip to the Isles of Scilly, because the temporary bus-rail arrangement would get us into Penzance – if on time – three minutes after SCILLONIAN III was scheduled to sail. Instead, we'd decided to spend the day in the nearby resort town of St. Ives, although we did stay on the train into Penzance for the purpose of making seat reservations for future journeys.

FGW 1003 PENZANCE-ST. EARTH [BODMIN PARKWAY] HST

Ed [43185 Great Western]

C [2]

BC

C* [5]

Ed [43021 David Austin – Cartoonist]

Depart 1003, arrive 1013 on the same HST upon which we'd arrived – this train normally headed for London Paddington.

FGW 1014/1456 ST. EARTH-ST. IVES & RETURN

Cmd [2] [150 249]

Depart 1014, arrive 1025 on a surprisingly busy, 2-car, Class 150 Sprinter, pausing at Leland Saltings and Carbis Bay; * We spent the next four hours doing what the English hordes were doing on school-break week, visiting the harbour, gazing at the seaside, and eating Cornish pasties – also stopping by the excellent Tate St. Ives art gallery; * Returning, depart 1456, arrive 1507; * 7 km in 11 mins, or 39 km/h (4 mls/24 mph).

VT 1512 [PENZANCE] ST. EARTH-ST. AUSTELL [BODMIN PARKWAY]

Cmd [4] [220 ???]

Depart 1512, arrive 1610 on a Virgin Cross Country Voyager also heading, during the engineering works, as far as Bodmin Parkway; * Onward by replacement bus, departing 1623, arriving **Plymouth** 1740; * Class 220 (BBD, 2000-1/r-CRC).



2000's-29: First Great Western's 1411 service from St. Erth arriving at St. Ives, made up of 2-car, Diesel Multiple Unit Sprinter set 150 149 (2007/10/16) [PETER DAWES].

VIRGIN VOYAGER

Virgin's 34, Class 220 Voyagers were an earlier version of the Super Voyagers, also built by Bombardier. Each car was diesel-powered but had four rather than five cars and no tilt feature.

FGW 1802 PLYMOUTH-NEWTON ABBOT [LONDON PADDINGTON] HST

Ed [43174]

C [2]

BC

C* [5]

Ed [43130]

Depart 1802, arrive 1840, stopping only at Totnes, on another FGW HST train, this one normally originating at Penzance; * By replacement bus to **Torquay**, departing 1909, arriving 1934 – then on foot to the Norwood Hotel in Belgrave Road; * 52 km in 38 mins, or 83 km/h (32 mls/52 mph).

LEFT HAND NOT KNOWING WHAT THE RIGHT HAND...

No one ever checked tickets or passes on the replacement buses operated by either Virgin or First Great Western, or seemed to care whether a passenger belonged to one company or the other. Although the guard on our Plymouth-Paddington HST assured us that rail service had not been suspended on the Torquay/Paignton branch, yet another replacement bus was waiting for us at Newton Abbot – luckily, with a few seats left.

23 OCT:

P&D 1030/1115 PAIGNTON QUEEN'S PARK-KINGSWEAR & RETURN

Es	[GWR]	[5239 Goliath]
C	[7]	[Rebecca, Sarah, Natasha, Jessica, Heidi, Nina, Ella]
OL		[13 Devon Belle]

To **PRESTON** in Lancashire, via Paignton and Newton Abbot, our twin objectives being to ride the Paignton & Dartmouth Steam Railway and watch Queens Park Rangers play for the final time on this holiday – beginning this day with another replacement bus departing Torquay 0938, arriving Paignton 0955; * Depart Queen's Park (adjacent to the main line station) at 1030, arrive Kingswear 1100, stopping at Goodrington and Churston, occupying Coach REBECCA; * Returning, depart 1115, arrive 1145 in HEIDI, then onto our final replacement bus, departing Paignton 1205, arriving **Newton Abbot** 1250; * 11 km in 30 mins, or 22 km/h (7 mls/14 mph); * No. 5239 (GWRW, 1924, DVR; ex-GWR, BR); * No. 13 (CCW, 1918; ex-LNWR AMB, PLC PK, PB, OBS Devon Belle, BR); * Nos. 4233 Rebecca (BR, 1956), 59513 Heidi (PSC, 1960) (both ex-BR).

"THE NATION'S HOLIDAY LINE"

Paignton & Dartmouth Steam Railway operated for 11 kilometres (*seven miles*) from Paignton along the beautiful Torbay coast and Dart river, before reaching Kingswear. Former Great Western 2-8-0T tank engine GOLIATH, built in-house back in 1924, pulled seven heavily loaded carriages this day, due to school break and a special tour party. Pullman Observation Saloon DEVON BELLE brought up the rear (surcharge of £1), built in 1918 and serving at one point on the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway. Most of the outward passengers changed to the ferry across the river to Dartmouth.



2000's-30: Paignton & Dartmouth's 1115 service from Kingswear to Paignton skirts the Torbay coast, behind former Great Western 2-8-0T No. 5239 GOLIATH (2007/10/23) [SANDRA DAWES].

VT 1403 [PLYMOUTH] NEWTON ABBOT-PRESTON [GLASGOW CENTRAL]

Cmd [4] [220 001 Somerset Voyager]

Depart 1403, arrive 1839, on another Virgin Cross Country Voyager, stopping at Exeter St. David's, Tiverton Parkway, Taunton, Bristol (Temple Meads and Parkway), Cheltenham, Birmingham New Street and Crewe (joining the West Coast Main Line there); * We stayed in the attic of the Park Hotel on Tulketh Road, a 10-minute taxi ride from both the station and Deepdale, home stadium of the oldest club in the Football League, Preston North End – farther out from the train station than we usually booked; * To the game by taxi and back, a scoreless draw whose highlight was a magnificent penalty save by Queens Park Rangers goalkeeper, Lee Camp, right in front of us in the away end, meaning that we'd witnessed no wins in three games during this holiday, but no defeats either; * 466 km in 4 hrs 36 mins, or 101 km/h (291 mls/63 mph).



2000's-31: Virgin Cross Country's 1535 Edinburgh-to-Bournemouth service rushes through Northallerton, Yorkshire, composed of a 4-car, Diesel Multiple Unit Voyager set (2007/10/16) [PETER DAWES].

FROM SOUTH TO NORTH

Our Newton Abbot-Preston journey on a Virgin Voyager DMU train covered almost 500 kilometres (*over 300 miles*) in four and a half hours – a credible average speed of 101 km (*61 mls*) per hour. I'd made seat reservations at Penzance, only to discover later that we'd been assigned window seats, not beside, but one behind the other. This Plymouth-Glasgow service was heavily loaded after Birmingham, passing through – but for some reason not stopping at – Wolverhampton.

24 OCT:

FTPE 1208 [BLACKPOOL] PRESTON-MANCHESTER PICCADILLY [AIRPORT]

Cmd [3] [185 151]

To **SOUTHAMPTON**, Hampshire, on the final train-riding day of our holiday, via Manchester, Reading, Staines and London, starting with taxis back to Deepdale to visit the excellent National Football Museum,

then to the station; * Depart 1208, arrive 1256 on another FTPE service headed for Manchester Airport, this one originating at Blackpool and including stops at Leyland, Chorley and Bolton, over a former London & North Western line; * 50 km in 48 mins, or 63 km/h (31 mls/39 mph).

VT 1354 MANCHESTER PICCADILLY-READING

Cmd [4] [220 028 Black Country Voyager]

Depart 1354, arrive 10 minutes early at 1703, on another Voyager, stopping at Stockport, Macclesfield, Stoke, Stafford, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Leamington Spa, Banbury and Oxford – again, the familiar Leamington Spa-Banbury stretch covered on past *Shakespeare Limited/Express* steam trains; * This train set's name was appropriate, given our visit to the Black Country museum; * 285 km in 3 hrs 9 mins, or 90 km/h (178 mls/56 mph).

SWT 1738 READING-STAINES [LONDON WATERLOO]

Cme [4] [458 8004]

Cme [4] [458 8007]

Depart 1738, arrive 1828 on a busy, 8-car, Class 458, Juniper EMU suburban train built by Alstom, our 11 stops including Wokingham, Bracknell and Ascot; * I'd phoned Kitty and Roger to warn that we'd be stopping at Ashford to pick up the "Ship Bag", circa 1815 hours, occupying the second Coach from the front – this being overly optimistic by perhaps half an hour; * 40 km in 50 mins, or 48 km/h (25 mls/30 mph); * Class 458 (ALS, 1998-2000).

SWT 1833 [WINDSOR & ETON] STAINES-LONDON WATERLOO

Cme [4] [450 109]

Depart 1833, arrive 1928 on a local train, its 13 stops including Ashford, Feltham, Hounslow, Brentford, Chiswick, Clapham Jct. and Vauxhall – Kitty and Roger successfully handing over the bag during our Ashford pause; * This quickly became a standing room-only service, filling up as far as Clapham Jct., and only slightly less crowded afterwards.

SWT 2005 LONDON WATERLOO-SOUTHAMPTON CENTRAL [POOLE]

Cme [5] [444 043]

Cme [5] [444 037]

Depart 2005, arrive 2122, stopping at Basingstoke, Winchester and Southampton Airport, on an Austrian-

built, Siemens Desiro EMU train featuring a take-out counter in each of the two, 5-car sets (and a gangway to enable movement between them) – this equipment having replaced older Wessex Electrics on this route; * By taxi to the Dolphin Hotel, High Street, a 5-minute walk from the docks and QUEEN MARY 2, which was scheduled to dock next morning at 0600; * 128 km in 1 hr 17 mins, or 100 km/h (80 m/s/62 mph); * Class 444 (SMT, 2003-4); • **25-31 OCT:** Home to **EDMONTON**, starting with a walk to the docks to catch the Hythe ferry across the harbour for the purpose of taking photos of QUEEN MARY 2, then to Queen Elizabeth Ocean Terminal for the voyage (which terminated at the new Brooklyn Cruise Terminal), by bus to LaGuardia to catch an Air Canada Embraer 190 to Toronto, and finally an Airbus 320 to Edmonton International.

QUEEN MARY 2

This was a follow-up to our 2003 voyage in the other direction on QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 and mirrored my father's 1913 emigration to Canada, via New York, on White Star's pre-war MAJESTIC. We spent six busy days on QM2, placed in service in 2004, her 148,000 Gross Registered Tonnes displacement being twice that of QE2, 14 times of MAJESTIC. Ropes having been cast off at 1700, we sailed down Southampton Water and out into the ocean for six days, this being the only true liner now regularly plying the Atlantic. Seas generally were calm, except for the second and third days when many of the 2,500 passengers displayed signs of sickness – including both of us. (The cure was the British version of Graval, orally for me, an injection by the ship's doctor for Sandra.) Overall, Cunard had done a good job with QM2 of maintaining the historical flavour of the company and its storied vessels – and keeping things manageable, despite the far greater size and capacity in comparison to QE2.



[cunard.com]



2000's-32: QUEEN MARY 2 docked at Queen Elizabeth Ocean Terminal, Southampton, on a rainy, late October morning, preparing to sail that afternoon for New York (2007/10/25) [SANDRA DAWES].



[MÁV, Gyermekjegy Vasúttörténeti Park (Hungarian Railway Museum) brochure (2007), cover]

THE ITALIAN WAY

Trenitalia's four-step fare system was typical of most travel-providers of this era, selling "adaptability" to the customer: • *Standard* (no restrictions); • *Flexi* (20% more; ability to change plans at last minute); • *Amica* (advance booking; seats limited); and • *Socio* (family, youth and seniors). The attractive woman certainly did catch the eye!



[Trenitalia brochure, 2007]

NOW FOR THE 2010's!

This ends my **2000's** volume. A subsequent **2010's** document chronicles our travels in 2013, 2016 and 2019.

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Please note: (i) named trains, locomotives and vessels have their own entry; (ii) stations and other landmarks are indexed under the city or town concerned; and (iii) places are indexed only where they were start or end points of specific trips, or where they were of special interest]

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CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS VERSION

Several minor revisions and style changes, as well as updated trip totals and percentage splits by decade (p. 7).